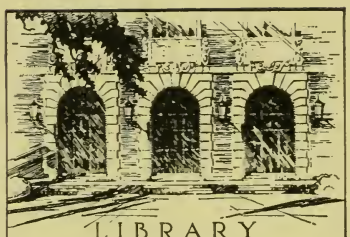

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CHARLES VERNON.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODE and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

CHARLES VERNON:

A Transatlantic Tale.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. HENRY SENIOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1849.

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PREFACE.

The greater part of this Narrative was written thirty years ago, while the Author was serving in Jamaica. The unfinished manuscript was then thrown aside and forgotten until last winter, when he found amusement and occupation in reading it over and completing the story.

Many of the descriptions of West Indian habits and manners are consequently no longer accurate portraits, for the social condition of these colonies has since very much improved, and negro slavery, in the English settlements, has happily become a matter of history.

Glassdrummond,
Ireland, 1848.

CHARLES VERNON.

CHAPTER I.

"LAND! Land on the starboard bow!" shouted out the seaman who had ascended the mast-head, in hopes of obtaining a bottle of rum, the usual reward to the sailor who, on a transatlantic voyage, first discovers the shore. After satisfying himself as to the truth of this report, the master of the merchant ship Tiger descended to the cabin to announce the news to his passengers; but as it was only six in the morning, and the short tropical twilight had but just given way to the sun, he found them all sleeping in their narrow berths round the state cabin. On being roused from their dreams of past scenes in Europe by the hoarse voice of the captain proclaiming "Jamaica is

in sight," a general scramble to reach the deck ensued, the men rushing up half-dressed, and wrapped in their great coats; and the ladies shrouded in their cloaks, to the amusement of the crew on deck. Among these passengers was Captain Charles Vernon, a young man of five-and-twenty, who, after serving five years in the Peninsular army, had, within the last three months, on the death of a Mr. Edwards, a distant relation, succeeded to two properties in Jamaica; a sugar estate called Cane Grove, and a coffee plantation called Mount Edwards. He was among the first to reach the deck, and to join in the general question of "Where's the land?" After looking disappointedly on nothing but an expanse of water,

"Look a little over the starboard bow, sir," said the man at the helm.

"I see nothing!"

"Do you not," said the captain of the ship, "see a faint outline just rising on the horizon?"

"And is that Jamaica! Yes, I perceive it now, like a bank of clouds rising from the sea and reflecting the sun." Disappointed at not

seeing more, the other passengers returned to their cabins to rectify the omissions of their dress, breakfast, and prepare for shore.

Vernon remained on deck, watching the island rapidly emerge from the ocean. The canvass of the vessel was filled by a steady trade-wind, to which she gently leant her broadside, and dividing each wave as she met it, neared the shore at the rate of seven knots an hour.

It was the eastern extremity of Jamaica, and as the ship's course was for Port Royal, she ran down the south coast close into the land. Towering aloft were the misty tops of the Blue Mountains, which, as a back-bone, run from the east to the west of the island in one central ridge. Branching off from these, smaller chains of hills extend towards the sea, where they terminate in abrupt cliffs hanging over the water, — wooded to the very edge of the precipice, and giving rise to many rivulets, which rush in a succession of waterfalls from their very sources. Between these lines of hills are luxuriant valleys, many of them then cultivated, and green with sugar plantations, — others still un-

cleared from the thick woods which cover every spot of uncultivated land. The stately houses of the planters were easily distinguished, but the small huts of the negroes were lost in groves of cocoa nut and mango trees, which always surround their clustering habitations.

Vernon felt his admiration heightened almost to awe as he gazed on the dark summits of the Blue Mountains, elevated 7000 feet above him, their broken masses presenting the outline of the Alps, clothed with the verdure and forests of the tropics. And the rich valleys spread between the hills, as he passed them in rapid succession, seemed each a separate paradise. "Surely here," thought he, "where Nature's bounty seems spontaneously to supply every natural want, — in a climate, too, which renders those wants few, — surely here must be found a greater share of happiness than usually falls to the peasant's lot."

His reverie was interrupted by the captain of the ship, who, putting a spy-glass into his hand, told him that he would show him part of his property, and pointed out a white object

high up on one of the central ridges, which he said was Mount Edwards' great house.

"I see," answered he, "the house, but can discover no trace of cultivation around it; it seems buried in forest."

"No; at this distance you cannot discover the coffee pieces, the coffee bushes are planted so thick, and their leaves are much the same colour as the rest of the woods; but there is some of the finest coffee there that I have seen in the whole country. I ought to know the property well, as also your sugar estate, Cane Garden, on the other side of the island: many a merry evening I have spent at both with poor Mr. Edwards. He used to keep them in capital order; but I fear within the last three years, since he left them, they have not been managed as well as they used to be."

"How so, captain?"

"Why, on my last voyage I was at Cane Garden to hasten your lazy overseer there in shipping his produce. He kept the Tiger waiting a whole week in Anatto Bay for fifty hogsheads of sugar and ten puncheons of rum, which, if old Edwards had been alive, he would

have had on board in two days. But I must now go and see the cable got ready, for we shall be at anchor in an hour. Holloa! forward there! all hands heave up the cable and range it; here comes the pilot. Jack, heave out a rope to the canoe there."

Up came the pilot, a stout young African, slave to a master pilot at Port Royal, who seldom went out himself. He took his post at the helm to steer the vessel through the Keys, several dangerous rocks lying outside of the palisadoes, or long peninsula forming the harbour of Kingston, at the extremity of which is situated the town of Port Royal. Between this peninsula and the Keys the vessel has to pass. She soon arrived opposite to Port Royal, and rounding the point of land on which stands Fort Charles, the principal defence of the harbour, she steered safely through the narrow part of the passage navigable for ships of large tonnage, and dropped her anchor between the artillery barracks at Port Royal and the flag-ship.

The anxiety of the passengers to get on shore equalled their former eagerness to see

it. All crowded round the captain, importuning him for his boat to go to Kingston. He, however, put them on shore at Port Royal, Kingston being seven miles up the harbour, and too long a row for European sailors.

From Port Royal there are wherries, or large flat-battomed open boats, with standing masts, schooner rigged, constantly plying to Kingston and back. In one of these Vernon embarked, or was rather carried; for the competition being great, and the negro boatmen not ceremonious, a stout negro actually lifted him from the pier-head, and deposited him safely in his wherry, and turned round to the disappointed crews of the others as soon as he had pushed off the boat, exclaiming, with exultation, "Hi, bo! massa go with me; massa know the Nancy good wherry."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Vernon left his ship, and before four he arrived at the wherry-wharf at Kingston, the sea breeze impelling the boat, which carried a great deal of canvass, at the rate of eight miles an hour.

The objects which presented themselves during this short passage were all interesting. Before him was the town of Kingston, screened a good deal by shipping, extending along the wharves in front, over the masts of which rose the red shingled roofs of the town, covering a space of about a mile and a half from east to west, and about half a mile from north to south. Immediately to the east of the town was the steep turtle-back-shaped hill, called Long Mountain, and behind it rose a succession of ridges, from the heights of Liguanea to the Blue Mountains. Right opposite the town of Port Royal, the small fort, the Apostle's Battery, showed itself on the barren hill to the right of Port Henderson. Further on was the now deserted post of Passage Fort, the landing-place of the small force under Colonel Venables, which captured Jamaica in the Commonwealth.

Between Passage Fort and Kingston the long line of lowland was broken by the white battlements of Fort Augusta, projecting far into the sea.

On landing at the Kingston wherry-wharf, Vernon inquired the way to the house of

Mr. M'Kenzie, a merchant, who had for some years acted as attorney for Mr. Edwards. He was told that it was too far for a walk.

"Why," answered he, "the length of the whole town is not more than two miles; surely it can be no walk."

"No, massa, no very far; but sun too hot for Buckra to pull foot. Make you sick, massa: me go for fetch chaise for you."

"No, no," said Vernon; "come, my good fellow, and show me the way."

The rays of the tropical sun were yet almost perpendicular, and reflected from the white sandy soil in which the town of Kingston stands (the streets not being paved). Vernon soon repented not having taken his guide's advice.

The long, narrow, ill-built lanes, which compose the lower part of the town, shut out the sea-breeze, and the glare and heat reflected from the ground became almost intolerable. The first two or three streets next the wherry-wharf seemed rather a part of a Spanish than of an English colony, the shop-doors being covered with Spanish inscriptions,

and here and there a large swinging sign, exhibiting, on the one side, the words "Posada Nueva," and on the other was decorated with the figure of a Spanish-American-Republican patriot, armed cap-à-pie, a sword in his hand, and a cigar in his mouth. Farther on, the streets were wider, and built so as to admit the sea-breeze; and an open irregular paved arcade ran along the front of the houses in some of the streets, affording the relief of its shade to the few white inhabitants of the place who were forced to walk.

The negro population almost rivalled in numbers, though not in activity, some of the busiest parts of London. Crowds stood listening to some energetic talker or quarreller, for almost all disputes are there adjusted by the one party outscolding the other at the utmost pitch of the voice. At each corner of the street was a pump, and round it was an assemblage of ten or twenty half-naked women, carrying buckets and jars, some vociferating in a general contest to get first to the water, the others either singing, laughing, or talking most loudly. All was noise, confusion, and merri-

ment. Sometimes the crowd was broken by a sort of gig, with a fixed leather top to it, called a kittireen; and from time to time showily-dressed coloured women, of all shades, from the dark mulatto to the fair Mustifina, attracted Vernon's attention by their fine tall persons, erect walk, and, amongst the fairer shades, strikingly handsome countenances.

Exhausted with the heat, and stunned with the multitude of strange noises, he at length reached M'Kenzie's counting-house, or, as his guide called it, his store. On entering a spacious cool room on the first floor, he was told by one of the clerks that Mr. M'Kenzie had left the counting-house for the day, and returned to his house in the upper part of the town. Thither, therefore, he proceeded, crossing in his road the parade, the only square in the town, so called from its being used for the island militia's musters.

The front door of Mr. M'Kenzie's house was wide open, and had neither knocker nor bell; in, therefore, he went, and found himself in a large empty hall, the mahogany flooring of which, more polished than an old

maid's favourite dining-table in England, reflected his tall figure as he slid and stumbled along, leaving the print of his dusty boots at every step. In vain he called, "Mr. M'Kenzie's servant!" — "Waiter!" — "Halloa!" nobody appeared, and the whole lower part of the house seemed deserted. At length, as his patience grew exhausted, a female figure made its appearance, perplexing Vernon how to address her, whether as a servant or as a mistress. She was splendidly attired in a fashionably-made silk dress, and covered with ornaments, having a large pearl, two gold, and a coral necklace suspended round her ample neck, ear-rings, and bracelets to match, and her long shining black hair confined behind by a golden comb. With large animated black eyes, and a clear brown complexion, she showed the remains of a very fine woman, now past the meridian. She was, in fact, Miss Betsy Green, Mr. M'Kenzie's quadroon housekeeper.

"What did you please to want, sir?" said she, with a tone of great familiarity.

"I want to see Mr. M'Kenzie. I called at

his office, but was told that he had gone home."

"Yes—he has come home, sir, but you cannot see him now; he is gone to lie down, and he never likes to be disturbed."

"He is not sick, I hope; is he?"

"No, sir—not sick; but he always goes to bed when he returns from the store, and then he is very cross if he is disturbed."

"But, ma'am, I am just come from England purposely to see him, and for once I think you may venture to wake him, and tell him Mr. Vernon from England wishes to see him."

"Very well;—but *I* won't do it though. Here!" exclaimed she, going to the back door which opened into the negro yard, "somebody!—somebody!" and, roused by her call, a negro man-servant appeared.

"Here, Cupid, go and tell your master that Mr. Vernon, the gentleman he expects from England, is arrived, and wants to see him immediately."

"Hi!" said the astonished negro, "missis no know massa asleep!"

"Yes, Cupid, but you must wake him."

"Missis, me 'fraid!"

"Go, sir, this instant!" said Miss Betsy, with a voice of authority; and Cupid tremblingly obeyed her commands.

In a few minutes down came the master, rubbing his red eyes, in his dressing-gown and slippers, and evidently just roused from his siesta; with a swollen figure, and a purple visage, he looked like a large sponge soaked in Madeira.

Although apparently in no very good humour at having his rest disturbed, he welcomed his guest to Jamaica, offering his hand with the air of a patron, and requested the pleasure of his company to dinner that day, and promised to procure for him a comfortable bed at Betsy Hall's lodging-house, close by.

It was now six o'clock in the evening, and Vernon had hardly time to change his dress before Cupid summoned him to dinner. In a sort of open piazza or balcony on the drawing-room floor he found the company assembled, consisting of seven gentlemen, besides M'Kenzie, and a younger partner in his house, a Mr. Fraser. To each of these Vernon was

formally introduced, receiving from most of them a slight bow on his first title being named as captain in a foot regiment, and a hand cordially extended on its being added, proprietor of Cane Garden and Mount Edwards.

The dinner-bell soon summoned the party to the dining-room, to which they descended after a more than usually troublesome hitch at the door-way, to establish precedence. Though spread to a greater length than a party of ten required for sitting room, the table was perfectly crowded with dishes: rich gravy and turtle soups filled each end; these gave place in due course to a large Jew fish, stewed in port wine, at the head, and a savoury Calipeevar fish at the bottom; which, in turn, were superseded by a quarter of lamb, and a sirloin of beef; a turkey and a ham flanked a roasted pig in the centre; while stews, harricoes and curries, roast and boiled chickens, geese, and ducks filled every vacant space. Decanters of Madeira, slightly cooled by being cased in wet linen bags, were placed between the guests; while bottles of Hock, Vinde-

grave, and Champagne were kept ready on the side-board, buried in small tubs, between layers of solid ice.

" Come, Captain Vernon," said M'Kenzie, " we'll drink your health and welcome to the island in a glass of Champagne.—Richard, hand round a bottle that has been long enough in the ice."

The wine, though half-frozen, still sparkled in the glass, and to Vernon's burning palate seemed to be nectar fit only for the gods.

" Where does the ice come from," said he, " which renders your liquors so deliciously cool ? "

" Oh, we have whole cargoes of it from Canada."

" But how can it be preserved in this climate ? "

" Why it is brought in large blocks of four or five feet square, and these piled together in an ice-house, from which the air is carefully excluded, produce a kind of frozen atmosphere of their own ; so that the waste is very small. The speculator who first introduced it sells it at a very moderate rate ; he says indeed that he

loses by it; but he is kind enough to continue supplying us with fresh ship-loads. But the room is getting too warm. Boy, pull the punka!"

A sort of swinging winnow, suspended from the top of the ceiling, was now set in motion by a string and pulley attached to it, worked by a servant in the next room. And this enormous fan swinging backwards and forwards sent down so strong a current of air, that the candles were forced to be removed to the sideboard. A second course of teal, ringtail pigeons, and land-crabs, with jellies and pastry, wound up the feast; the host telling Vernon that he was obliged to his manager at Mount Edwards for furnishing the former delicacies. And after a sitting of nearly two hours, the cloth was at length removed, and Madeira and well-iced Claret placed on the table, with a desert of pineapples, grapes, strawberries, star apples, mangoes, jack fruit, oranges, sweet-sops, and melons. During dinner the company had been silently intent on the business before them; but now conversation and the host's excellent wine both circulated briskly. In a circle chiefly

mercantile, colonial affairs and politics were the principal topics. Hopes of the success of the revolutionary cause in South America (the trade with which from Kingston was then very considerable) were ardently expressed. And all joined in expressing sympathy for the oppressed natives, and detestation of the tyranny of the Spaniards.

"It is a noble cause," said M'Kenzie, "and I have patronised it, and embarked much money in it, by sending cargoes of provisions into Carthagena, not so much because I think it a lucrative speculation,—though those that evaded the blockade sold well,— as from my love of the cause of freedom. Gentlemen! we will drink a bumper to the success of the patriot cause, and more especially the brave garrison at Carthagena, and that of freedom and liberty all over the world."

The wicked machinations of their enemies, Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Brougham, and the dreaded registration bill, were next canvassed; and deep indignation was expressed at the gross injustice of the English government in

presuming to interfere between them and their private property, the negroes.

"Did you ever read anything so infamous as the paper on West India affairs in the last Edinburgh Review?" said M'Kenzie. "Do you suppose if these wild ideas become disseminated amongst our negroes, (and dissemnated they will be if their rabid Methodist preachers get hold of it,) that the colony will be able to exist? For my part, I think our slaves are fast getting dangerous notions into their heads; several have of late attempted to lay before me formal complaints of my overseers."

"Which of course you did not listen to," observed one of the party.

"Oh! certainly not. I soon settled that point by ordering the rascals to the workhouse, where the whip should put them in a better humour. But what is Brougham's motive? what does he get by slandering us? Surely what passes here is nothing to him, even if any of his representations were true."

Vernon, who had been early told and firmly

believed that the negroes were most kindly treated, listened without entering into the discussion.

"And how do you like Jamaica, young gentleman?" said old counsellor Blathwayt.

"Why as yet I have not had much opportunity of judging. I only landed to day; but I was delighted with the appearance of the island as we made the land."

"Yes, you saw some fine rich sugar estates about Port Morant, but nothing to those on the north coast. Do you intend making any stay here?"

"I have two years' leave of absence, which I shall not exceed if I can help it."

"But surely, sir, succeeding to such fine properties, you don't intend to go on soldiering, do you? Believe me, you will be more at your ease here than vagabondising with the rest of them to get your brains knocked out."

"But perhaps I may prefer," said Vernon, "running the risk of getting knocked on the head to your quiet life here."

"Oh, there is no accounting for tastes," replied the counsellor; "but I prophecy that

you will stay longer than you expect — you will find you like the island the better the longer you remain. I have found it so. I have been here forty years, and I would not on any account leave my comforts for the cold, foggy, unwholesome climate of England."

"Have you much society in Kingston?" asked Vernon.

"Not so good as I recollect twenty years ago, when people all lived on their estates instead of going away to England. Very large parties are now more scarce; but then we meet at little snug family dinners like this pretty often."

"Nay," replied Vernon, "I should rather call this entertainment a feast than a family party: but what female society is there in Kingston?"

"Oh, white ladies I suppose you mean. Why I know little of them myself; but if you choose, you may see them all paraded for your inspection to-morrow evening, when one of our monthly subscription assemblies takes place: I can give you a ticket, for I subscribe, though I never go. You 'll see but a poor

display: we have very few married men, and most of these unlucky fellows have managed to persuade their wives to go to England to superintend the education of their daughters. White women cannot stand this climate. You 'll see them deadly pale, or as yellow as the jaundice."

"You have really then no ladies' society here?"

"Not many *ladies*," said the counsellor with a smile; "but then we have the women of colour—the *brown ladies*, who *entre nous* have much finer persons, and a hundred times more animation and vivacity, than your European women. You 'll think so, I'll answer for you, as soon as you know both."

"Well," said M'Kenzie, who had been listening to the conversation, "you shall judge for yourself, Captain Vernon. Go to-morrow night to the assembly. I will introduce you in the morning to the ladies at my friend Otway's: his daughters will be very glad to get hold of a young officer, and as they are only four in number, and you are fresh landed, it won't fatigue you too much if they expect

you to dance with them all. And they will introduce you as much as you please. The day after we will get up a quality ball for you."

"A quality ball! Pray what does that mean?" asked Vernon.

"A brown dance," said M'Kenzie.

"What, a ball to which mulattoes are asked?"

"Yes, the mulatto women; the coloured men are of course excluded. My housekeeper shall superintend and take care that it shall be very select."

Coffee came, and the party broke up. Cupid showed Vernon the way to his lodging-house, where the fatigues of the day and the luxury of a comfortable bed on shore, together with a more than usual quantity of wine, soon put him to sleep.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning, after a Jamaica breakfast, resembling, from the variety of its dishes, an English dinner, Vernon went to Mr. M'Kenzie's counting-house, where he was occupied the whole forenoon in looking over the accounts of his estates. The debt on Cane Garden he found was 10,000*l.*, and that on Mount Edwards 3000*l.* currency, while the annual income for many years back had been about 2,500*l.* a year from the sugar estate, and 1000*l.* a year from the coffee estate. It would therefore take five years' produce to pay off the debt, and though the merchant was quite satisfied to let it remain, paid off Vernon saw that it ought to be; for he was astonished at the amount of many of the charges for supplies of provisions, clothing, &c., to the estates; charges which he suspected to be, as they really were, at least double what the same articles would have cost to a resident proprietor with the

management in his own hands. For as long as the estate was in his debt, the merchant considered the profit of extravagantly-paid supplies a legitimate perquisite.

"And now," said he, after he had pored over the accounts till his head grew confused, "you must fulfil your promise, Mr. M'Kenzie, of introducing me to the family who are to permit me to make one of their party at the Kingston assembly."

They then drove in a kittereen to Mr. Otway's house. Here they found the same difficulty to make themselves heard as Vernon had experienced the day before at M'Kenzie's, proving that a morning visit was an event of too rare occurrence to be provided for. When a servant at length appeared, to their question whether Mrs. Otway and the ladies of the family were at home, he said he must go and enquire.

"Ten to one," observed Mr. M'Kenzie, "they are gone to lie down. It is now three o'clock, and at that hour it is the custom to take some sleep. I always do so myself as soon as I can get away from the office."

" Yes, I have to apologise for waking you yesterday ; but here comes the servant back."

" Massa, missis say she come down presently."

" I hope we did not disturb the ladies," said M'Kenzie.

" Yes, massa, dem all gone to bed, but me wake dem," said Sambo.

In about half an hour they made their appearance, and M'Kenzie introduced his friend as a young soldier just arrived, and anxious to show his gallantry by attending the ladies to the assembly that evening. He was graciously received by the girls ; but Mrs. Otway enquired " To what regiment he belonged in the island ? "

" To none," said Mr. M'Kenzie. " My friend is come out to see his estates : he is the cousin and heir to poor old Mr. Edwards, whom you knew very well, Mrs. Otway."

The mother's features relaxed while she assured Mr. Vernon that she and her daughters would feel most happy to have the pleasure of his company, and requested him to dine with them that day at seven. " Mr. Otway will, I

am sure, be delighted to see a relation of his old and intimate friend poor Mr. Edwards."

To fill up the remainder of the day, as Vernon declined following the general example and going to bed, Mr. M'Kenzie offered him the use of either his curricle or saddle-horse. Vernon chose the latter, and at five o'clock, when the meridian heat began to abate, the merchant's horse, a superb grey, was brought to his lodging-house door.

"Massa, take care Springer no trow you," said the groom.

"Is he vicious, then?"

"Springer terrible fellow, massa," answered the negroe; "for me massa, Massa M'Kenzie, no able to ride him; him trow massa on de race-course last time him try, and him neber ride him since, and him quite saucy now, massa."

Vernon's attention was at first employed solely in moderating the impatience of his horse; but after having breathed himself by a canter of three miles, Springer was satisfied to allow his rider to attend to the features of the new country around him. He had taken the wind-

ward road, and had now nearly reached the foot of the Long Mountain, where it turns off, and runs along the side of the harbour, close to the water's edge. Behind him was the extensive uninteresting plain of Liguanea, studded throughout with the villas (creolice penns) of the Kingston traders. Before him, the road was confined on the left by the steep woody sides of the Long Mountain; and on the right bordered by the harbour, its calm waters shut in by the distant isthmus of the palisadoes, and looking like an inland lake. The surface was only occasionally ruffled by the circular ripples caused by the springing of the shoals of fish as they fled before some voracious Bonito. At the further extremity of the opposite palisadoes rose the town of Port Royal, and the huge hulls of the men-of-war stationed there, reflected as in a looking-glass by the still water in which they were riding, appeared at the distance to be double their real size, the reflected image being so strong as not to be distinguishable from the true object.

The whole scene, though it had none of the romantic magnificence of the mountain views

from deck the day before, was still interesting to one to whom every tree, shrub, and weed was new. Crossing the clear rivulet at the naval watering-place, he passed through the noisy assemblage of washerwomen, who, standing all day nearly naked in the running water, with a bench covered with linen before them, hammer it between two boards, after the continental fashion. Half a mile further on, he arrived at Rock Fort, a small battery crossing the road, with lines from its right, extending to the harbour, and to its left reaching up to the steep impracticable sides of the Long Mountain. This small fortification, which requires therefore only a small force, would prove a troublesome obstacle to an invading enemy advancing from windward on Kingston. After crossing the sounding drawbridge, over which the road passes through the fort, Vernon turned his horse's head homewards.

At Mrs. Otway's a party of five or six men, and about the same number of ladies, were assembled: the women arranged in a circle on and around the drawing-room sofa, while the

men formed a separate party, and were walking up and down the open verandah. After being introduced to the master of the house, a respectable-looking elderly man, Vernon took his seat next the sofa, and in vain endeavoured to keep up a conversation with the beings on it, who, when they had observed that it was very hot, and very dusty, and that they expected a very full assembly that evening, came to a standstill. The announcement of dinner was therefore particularly welcome, and he took down Margaret Otway.

The dinner was as profuse, and the iced wines circulated as rapidly, as at Mr. M'Kenzie's the day before; but no general conversation took place till the ladies had retired, and the men, released from their unaccustomed presence, looked comfortable.

Vernon found Miss Margaret Otway, now disengaged from the stiff circle which had restrained her before, very conversible.

"Tell me how you pass your time here?" asked he.

"Oh! really one's day passes so without a single event, that I have nothing to tell."

"Well, allow me to catechise you; pray at what hour do you rise?"

"At eight; papa always wants breakfast by nine, that he may be at the office by ten."

"Oh, so much for breakfast; and that is over by ten?"

"Yes."

"And what do you do then?"

"Oh, I really don't know; sometimes, when it is not too hot, and I don't feel too languid, I practise, but not often."

"Have you much time for reading?"

"Why, papa has no books; sometimes I get a novel from Smith and Kinnears' circulating library; or sometimes I knit purses, or lie down on the sofa till second breakfast-time."

"Second breakfast! what is that?"

"Why, a sort of luncheon, at two o'clock."

"Well, and then how do you employ yourself?"

"Oh, it is really so hot then, that we generally all go and lie down and sleep, if the mosquitoes will let us, till the cool of the evening."

"And when do you get up again?"

"At five, generally."

"And then?"

"And then, when papa is in a very good humour, he sometimes indulges us in a drive with him in the curricle; but he has only room for one, and as there are four of us, it seldom comes to my turn."

"And if you don't go out with him?"

"Then I sometimes lounge about the garden, or lie down again, and then dress for dinner."

"And after dinner?"

"Oh, if we have company at home, or dine out, I sometimes play a little music, or a game of cards."

"And at what time do your parties generally break up."

"About ten; we are generally all in bed by eleven."

"A good deal of sleeping and meals?"

"Why, I am afraid so; but how can one help it? The climate does not allow one to leave the house, and at home I have no resources; and—but I see mamma is making a signal: don't let papa keep you too long. We ought to be at the assembly by nine."

At nine, accordingly, in spite of his host's entreaty to take part of the succeeding cool bottles of claret just out of the ice-tub, Vernon joined the party in the drawing-room, and accompanied them shortly after to the Kingston theatre, where the assembly was held. The whole of the pit was boarded over on a level with the stage; so that while the daughters danced on the platform and on the stage, the mothers reclined in the boxes. The assembly was a full one: many of the women present looked lady-like, but the majority of the men had not the air of gentlemen. The best were the officers of the * * * regiment, quartered at Up Park Camp: they were, however, looked at with jealously by the Kingstonians, and the stewards of the assembly had, on a former occasion, refused their admittance either in boots or trowsers, both indispensible parts of their regimental uniform. This point was expeditiously settled by Captain O——, of the * * * regiment, first pulling the nose "of the dirty vendor of molasses and rum, who had presumed to attempt to turn an Irish gentleman out of the room," and then calling him

out and hitting him next day, telling him, when he gave him a slight wound on the shoulder, "that he hoped he was sensible of the honour done him." No one ever after troubled himself as to the details of the dress of an officer in uniform.

Vernon, as was expected from him, had the honour of dancing with each of the four Miss Otways, which thoroughly knocked him up, the heat rendering the exercise much more fatiguing than he had ever felt it before. They all danced well. Margaret continued to be his favourite, but his feeling towards her was more nearly allied to pity than to admiration, — pity to see a fine girl, with good natural talents, and apparently an excellent disposition, neglected in education, and the charms, which in spite of that mal-education were discoverable, unappreciated. He was offered further introductions; but already heartily tired, and seeing nothing very inviting, he declined. At a late hour he returned to his lodgings, somewhat of Mr. Blathwayt's opinion, that Jamaica ladies were far from interesting.

After breakfast the following morning, he

walked to Mr. M'Kenzie's office, to complete the examination of the accounts of his estates, and to meet his overseer, a Mr. Tomlins, from Mount Edwards, who had written to M'Kenzie to say he had seen Mr. Vernon's arrival in the papers, and was eager to pay his respects to his principal. The day was burning; in crossing the parade (or square) on his way to the office, his attention was arrested by a long line of negro figures, each bearing a load on the head, moving rapidly on, two and two abreast, in a sort of half run, resembling the military double quick step, apparently goaded on to this exertion by a black man who kept beside them, armed with a long twisted cow-skin whip. He found, when he got near them, that they were employed in levelling the parade, by removing the soil from the centre part of it (which rose above the level), to fill up the channels left by the streams of water, which, coming down from the mountains, make their way across it after heavy rains. This the gang were doing by filling large turtle-shells with the earth from the centre, by means of hoes, and running with

their load on their heads, and throwing it into the empty channels.

They were connected two and two together (as we couple pointer dogs in England), men and women indiscriminately, by iron collars fixed round their necks. A chain of about six feet in length was attached from collar to collar, swinging between the two wretches thus coupled, or trailing behind them on the ground.

A poor slender girl, not more than fourteen years old, exhausted with the heat, and tottering under the weight she bore, fell in the rank as they were running to deposit their burthens a little further on. Her companion to whom she was chained, occupied with steadying her own load, did not immediately perceive her fall, and dragged her on the ground a step or two. Up came the driver threatening punishment.

Vernon sprung forward, and seizing his uplifted arm, wrested his whip from him with such force, as nearly threw him to the ground, calling to him at the same time to give an account of who he was, and who were the people that he was maltreating.

"Hi, massa!" said the astonished negro; "dem workhouse negers — me driver!"

"And why do you treat them so?"

"Massa," replied the driver, "me ordered by massa, the supertender of de workhouse, to get dis work done to-day. If me no force dem, den dey no do it; den massa at de workhouse flog me. Give me my whip, massa; me must make dem work hard."

"You shan't strike that girl; she could not help falling," said Vernon, unwillingly delivering back his cow-skin to the sub-tyrant.

"No, massa," answered he, while the poor negress, who had now got up, resumed her burthen, adding, "God bless da good buckra!"

Vernon was turning away to leave this scene, when the sound of the whip drew his attention. It fell this time on the shoulders of a young man, who bore it without wincing, and went on with his work with a look of sullen despair.

"What has that man done that you strike him?" asked Vernon in a tone of strong indignation.

"Massa, him so sulky, him no mind what

me tell him ; no care for flogging, no care for nothing."

" Who does he belong to ? "

" Cæsar ! " said the driver calling him, " who for you massa ? "

" Me belong to Mount Edwards estate — me no know new massa in England name."

" To Mount Edwards estate ! " replied Vernon, with increased interest. " What brought you here ? by whose orders ? "

" Missa M'Kenzie, for me massa attorney send me here."

" Why, and for what reason ? "

" Massa, da 'basher at Mount Edwards want to take my wife from me, and because poor Clara no choose for leave me, Missa Tomlins ill-use her ; and when me no able for bear dis no longer, and see my wife dying, come for tell dis to Massa M'Kenzie, and beg him for save us, him no hear me, and call me runaway neger, and send me here ; and me hear my poor wife sick, break her heart, and me no able for go see her."

" Good God ! " thought Vernon, " can this be true ! — and yet, as he does not

know me, it may be so. Here you driver! what do they call you? This man is my property; release him instantly."

The driver could not, he said, do this; but he accompanied Vernon to the superintendant of the workhouse, who, at the owner's desire, instantly released his slave.

Poor Cæsar, from whom neither blows nor worse oppression could extract a tear, but who had brooded over his own and his Clara's sufferings with a sort of sullen grief, could not stand this sudden change: he wept, he danced with joy, till, suddenly checking himself, he asked with a look of great anxiety, "But my wife, massa?"

"Don't be uneasy, Cæsar," said his master; "if what you state is true, she shall have ample justice. I meet your overseer to-day, and will enquire about her, and you shall stay with me in Kingston to-day; and very soon I intend going up to the mountain myself, and you shall go with me."

Cæsar left the room with a heart too full for utterance. Vernon, after enquiring the name and address of the owner of the slave girl in

whose cause he had first interfered, and hearing that her name was Quamba, and that she belonged to a free woman of colour, proceeded to M'Kenzie's counting-house. He recounted to the merchant the scene he had witnessed, and expressed his astonishment at his sending Cæsar to such a dreadful place of punishment, without first at least listening to his story.

"Oh, you are young in the country, Mr. Vernon," answered M'Kenzie, "and you must not let the plausible stories of the negroes impose on your good nature. However, as that black fellow has been there now a week, it may be as well to send him back to his work at the estate. I should have released him myself before this, but, to say the truth, I had forgotten that he was there. As to my not listening to his story, I am forced to make it an invariable rule not to listen to any of their stories. If I did not send every one of them that attempts to complain to the workhouse for their pains, I should be pestered to death."

"But the barbarity of the driver, and the chain," continued Vernon.

" Why the workhouse is not meant to be a place of comfort: there could be no example or use in it if they were not made to work hard. They cannot, in my opinion, be forced to it too much: they are all sent there as a punishment, and many for crimes, such as theft, which would be hanging matters in England. And as to the chain, don't the convicts at home work with their irons on? Were you never in Portsmouth dock-yard, Captain Vernon?"

" Is it left to the discretion," demanded Vernon, " of any master or mistress to send a slave to this place of punishment, without even having to allege an offence?"

" Yes, certainly."

" And then the caprice, ill-humour, or bad-temper of an owner may at any time send his slave thither, and may keep him there as long as the whim lasts, or till he can find time to recollect so trifling a circumstance; and all this while the poor wretch is undergoing a discipline which you acknowledge to be adequate to real and great crimes! and this you call justice! And as to the Portsmouth convicts, Mr. M'Kenzie, they are worked in

irons, it is true; but how different from those workhouse couples! You well know, if you have been there, that those convicts have all had a fair trial, and, thank God! for the credit of my country, there is no driver and no whip. I would not have believed it possible had I not seen it with my own eyes, that here, in the centre of the principal town in the island, under your very windows, and in sight of every one, such cruelties should be perpetrated! —nay even justified!" said Vernon, swelling with innate English indignation at slavery when seen for the first time.

"Pho! Pho!" answered M'Kenzie; "wait till you have been some time in the country, and become acquainted with the perverse character of the negroes before you quarrel with us about them. Here! here is the provision account which you asked for yesterday:" and he shuffled Vernon off, not at all liking the argument which had been forced on him.

Soon after Mr. Tomlins, the overseer, came to wait on his employer. He was a vulgar, tall, thin, red-haired, middle-aged man, who

endeavoured to smooth his sour looks into a fawning smile, and kept "bowing and bowing" like a Chinese toy, apparently to the satisfaction of M'Kenzie, who received his servility as a due, or returned it with a gracious nod.

Vernon, disgusted with his manner, and strongly prejudiced against Tomlins by Cæsar's story, cut short all further conversation by telling him that he intended going up to Mount Edwards himself in the course of a day or two. Tomlins, although probably as little pleased with this sudden visit as with his principal's manner, was obliged to confess himself gratified, and said that he would stay in town in order to have the honour of showing the way. Vernon accepted this offer; but feeling himself too angry as yet to investigate the affair dispassionately, deferred, till his arrival on the estate, entering into Cæsar's wrongs. The overseer took his leave, believing that, on the whole, he had made a favourable impression.

Vernon finished his morning's work by purchasing M'Kenzie's grey. He was reminded of his engagement to the "Quality Ball," and asked to dine with the merchant. He replied

he would not fail, but that he meant to ride to Up Park Camp, to see an old friend in the * * * regiment, with whom, if he found him, he should probably dine. Mounting, therefore, his new purchase, he cantered off towards the Camp, which lies on a gentle ascent of about two miles and a half to the north of Kingston. It then contained the only king's barrack in the island; and was built with much greater reference to the health of its occupants than any of the other posts, which were all island property. The barracks contained room rather more than enough for two strong regiments: three have been crowded into them occasionally. The young soldier was much pleased, on passing through the south barrier gate, at the comfortable appearance of the whole. In front were the excellent field officers' quarters, surrounded each with a small garden; behind them the officers' barracks formed a line divided into wings, each wing occupied by a regiment, and comprising two large long airy buildings, the fronts covered with green jalousied piazzas. The upper rooms were captains', and the lower subalterns' quar-

ters. Each regiment had also a spacious detached mess-house placed in the centre, between the two buildings containing the officers' quarters. Behind these, arranged in a third line, were the men's barracks : airy and roomy, flanked by two separate hospitals, built on a necessarily extensive scale. The whole of the camp extended full a mile and a half in length, and about the same in breadth, covered with fine green herbage, beautifully ornamented with the blossom of a yellow weed resembling a buttercup. Numbers of the officers' horses, and the goats of the soldiers' wives, were enjoying this fine pasturage, or standing under the shades of the trees with which this park-like camp is studded.

Vernon rode on to the right wing, which the sentinel at the gate had pointed out to him as the quarter of the * * * regiment. To his great joy, he here found out his friend Captain O'Halloran, who had been promoted from Vernon's regiment to that in which he now served. After the cordial greeting with which brother officers always meet, and after explaining his motive for coming out to Jamaica,

Vernon asked his friend how he liked West India service?

"Why better," said Captain O'Halloran, "than I expected. Our quarters are excellent, the duty easy, and our finances, if properly managed, allow even a subaltern to keep a horse and live very comfortably on his pay. Our great want is society, of which, save naval and military, we have none. I have never yet found my way into a civilian's house, and you know I have been here a year."

"That seems strange, too," said Vernon, "for, as far as I can judge from the little that I have seen of Kingston society, you would be great acquisitions, especially to the ladies, who seem much neglected."

"The mothers," replied O'Halloran, "are all afraid of us; and with the fathers we find still less favour. A man's value in this commercial place, his worth altogether, is estimated by the length of his purse."

At six o'clock, the old tune of "Oh, the roast beef of Old England," echoing from the clear-toned bugles of the regiment, announced the mess hour.

At dinner he heard a melancholy account of the ravages which the yellow fever had made in the regiment. They had been in the West Indies eleven years, and in that time had buried two thousand soldiers, and nearly ninety officers, almost all of whom were victims to the fever. Much of this was, perhaps, their own fault. The men, all Irish, and accustomed to whisky at home, drank the new rum to a great excess; and many of the officers lived very hard. After an excellent dinner, the wine circulated briskly, and the band of the regiment stationed in the piazza played the national Irish tunes. On the health of the colonel being proposed, it played "St. Patrick's Day" round the table; and Vernon, though stunned with the noise of the big drum thundering behind him, could not but admire how "*con amore*" they went through this part of the ceremony. He got away just in time to keep his engagement at Kingston.

CHAPTER III.

"And you don't intend going to Miss Green's dance in those dirty boots, Captain Vernon?" said his landlady, shocked at hearing him inquire the way to the coloured ball without having altered his dress.

"Nay, I certainly did," replied he; "but if I shall be thought singular if I go as I am, I must beg you to tell me how I ought to appear there."

"Hi!" said Miss Betsy Hall. "Why as you were dressed last night, when you went to dance with the white ladies, to be sure! You really want to be rude to us to-night! Aye—you may laugh; but I assure you, we think ourselves quite as good as the buckra women!"

"Ah, now you look quite handsome," said she, as Vernon reappeared in his evening dress; "and now go. You'll see plenty of pretty girls there, though they are not buckras. I am going there too, presently, and will introduce you to any of them."

Guided by the distant music of four fiddles and a tambourine, which, in the quiet of a Kingston night, where few carriages are passing, is heard to a considerable distance, Vernon found his way to the house whence these sounds came.

A crowd of negro gazers filled the street in front, and the doors and windows were thrown open to admit air.

The large room was crowded, but the "brown ladies" were nearly twice as numerous as the men, consisting of merchants, some of their clerks, and a few of the officers from camp. The last seemed decidedly the favourites of the girls, though as much the reverse with the mothers and with the merchants. Indeed, it was with difficulty that Miss Betsy Green obtained M'Kenzie's permission to send cards to these few, both as a compliment to Vernon, and because her room would not look gay without a few uniforms.

As Vernon entered, all the younger part of the company were dancing with great animation to the merry tune of "The Devil amongst the Tailors;" those who could not find partners

dancing with each other. The mothers were sitting round the room, while M'Kenzie and several other merchants, whose dancing-days were over, stood at the upper end, criticising with the grave and experienced eyes of Eastern pashas the dark beauties passing and repassing before them. It was a very different scene from the assembly the night before. The pale languid looks of the European ladies, their stiffer manners, and lack of conversation, were strongly contrasted with the health and vigour and vivacity of mind and body which animated their brunette rivals. Their dresses, costly in material, were made in the extreme fashion of that day.

One lovely girl particularly attracted Vernon's admiration. She looked about eighteen, and was dancing with another dark-eyed beauty with more grace than spirit. An expression of feminine mildness, of sweetness of temper, subdued the animation of her full black eyes. Her complexion was so very slightly tinged with brown, that the mixture of African blood would not have been detected in any other society. He even thought that

this shade of colour softened down and improved the expression of her features, as the mellow tints of an old picture add to its effect.

His stare attracted his landlady, who renewed her offer of introducing him to a partner.

"Yes," answered he, "I should like very much to dance if you can get me as a partner that beautiful girl who is dancing with another in a plaid dress."

"Oh, Miss Julia;—yes, I dare say I can; but she would like you better if you had your red coat on, Captain Vernon."

"Who is she?"

"Why, she is the daughter of old Admiral Leslie; her mother lived with the admiral at the Penn while he commanded here, and he gave her two houses and several negroes when he left the country. She is a good girl, but I wish she was wiser. Her mother had a deal of trouble and expense in sending her to Miss Mary's school, and getting her genteelly brought up, and hoped with her pretty face to have her well settled with some gentleman who could buy her plenty of houses and

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negroes. But Hi! this not do for Miss Julia; when she come to be sixteen years old, she run away with an officer to camp, who had nothing but his pay."

"And is she now under this officer's protection?"

"No, poor girl; the officer died of fever a year ago, and she, poor fool, was ready to break her heart after him, though he could not leave her a dollar to buy her mourning with. But come, they have finished that dance, and I will introduce you. Julia, my dear, this gentleman wishes to dance with you; he is a soldier-officer, though he wears a blue coat."

After a country dance Vernon engaged her in conversation: the *naïveté* of her manner, and the artlessness with which she allowed him to question her as to her parentage and history, added to the charm of her appearance.

"And so you were very happy at camp with Mr. Ross?"

"Yes, very happy; he was always so good to me, and I loved him dearly. All my relations, especially mama, were angry with me for taking a husband who could not make

me handsome presents, or buy negroes for me ; but I did not care, I was then too happy."

" He died of the fever a year ago, I think you said ?"

" Yes ; he was so fond of shooting, and would go out all day into the swamps to shoot snipes, and laughed at me when I told him that he would get the fever ; and when he did get it, he lived only five days."

" How long were you at camp then ?"

" Nearly a year ; too long, mama tells me ; she says that it has spoilt me, and now she gets angry when I ask her to hire a kittereen on Sunday evening to go and hear the band ; but as she has forgiven my leaving her for poor Mr. Ross, I have promised not to settle again without her consent."

" And will you leave your future disposal then entirely to your mother, and submit to any choice she may make ?"

" Oh no ; she will not, I hope, be so unkind : but she often reminds me of the unprovided state in which my imprudence and the death of Mr. Ross has left me, and so she makes me very unhappy. For instance, sir, she would

persuade me to listen to that old Mr. Anderson (he who is watching us so from the other side of the room), because he offers to settle a house and negroes on me."

"But I trust there is no chance of such an arrangement?"

"Oh no; but he makes mama scold me sadly."

He then endeavoured to sound her West Indian feelings by recounting the scene which he had witnessed in the morning, the barbarous usage of the workhouse negroes, and especially of the poor girl Quamba, and of his own slave Cæsar.

"Hi!" said she, surprised and annoyed by his indignation; "Quamba is my mother's property."

"And why was Quamba sent there?"

"Why, she had the misfortune to break a China coffee-pot, that the Admiral my father had given to mama, when she was cleaning it. And mama got into a passion, and told her if she did not replace it she would send her to the workhouse. And Quamba, poor negro, had not I suppose any money to buy another,

even if she could have found its match; and she has now been three weeks in the workhouse."

"And could not you intercede for her with your mother, or lend her the money?"

"No, mama is always angry if any one interferes between her and her slaves, and I had not money to spare for the poor girl. Indeed, to tell the truth, perhaps I could have done so, but I never thought of it; but you are like Mr. Ross, and think a great deal more of these things than we who are always used to slaves. However, if you really feel so interested about poor Quamba, you can speak to mama, and ask her to forgive Quamba: I am sure she cannot refuse you such a trifle."

Vernon was fascinated by his new acquaintance, and yielding to the impulse of the moment, was glad to seize the excuse of his wish to rescue her slave girl from the workhouse, as a motive for calling on Mrs. Leslie the next day.

Quamba's release was easily obtained, for Mrs. Leslie seemed in a very gracious mood; while Julia, looking still more beautiful in her

simple morning dress, listened with girlish pleasure to the admiration which Vernon did not attempt to conceal. Without any fixed purpose, indeed without any thought of the future, he found himself almost unconsciously making love to the beautiful creole. And day after day he put off his visit to his estate, excusing himself one day because it was too hot, the next because he fancied that it looked rainy, and another day because he did not choose to feel well; but in truth, because he could not break the spell which brought him every evening to flutter round this dangerous attraction; and at last, when he could no longer excuse himself from keeping his appointment at Mount Edwards, and he took leave of Julia the evening before his journey, she did not answer him when he told her that some day he hoped they might go there together. Her flushed cheek and oppressed breathing betrayed her emotion. Young, artless, and single-minded, she had not disguised the gratification which Vernon's first marked preference produced, for her instinctive good taste told her how superior he

was to any European she had hitherto known. His easy frank manners won her confidence at once; in him she had found a friend who sympathised with her hopes and fears, whose presence made her self-satisfied and happy. Could she dare to hope that this new existence was to last?

The morning sun had but just overtopped the side of the Long Mountain, when Vernon, accompanied by Mr. Tomlins, his agent, set off on his intended visit to Mount Edwards. He had borrowed M'Kenzie's chaise to take him to the Hope tavern, where the carriage-road ends at the foot of the first ridge of hills. He was to find there his saddle-horse, sent on by Cæsar.

It was a still close, morning, and the sea-breeze not having yet set in, not a breath of air was stirring; and Vernon, overpowered by the heat even while reclining inactive in the carriage, was astonished to see Tomlins, who rode on horseback by his side, arrayed in the warm garments of England, and provided with a large great coat rolled up and strapped behind his saddle. After an hour's drive they

arrived at the tavern ; and Vernon, mounted on his grey horse, and Cæsar on a mule, crossed the Hope river, or rather rivulet, and began to ascend the heights of the Port Royal mountains by a narrow zigzag path, not more than four feet in breadth, cut through the luxuriant woods which clothe the uncultivated sides of the mountain. Up this steep path the party proceeded in file, and were frequently obliged to stoop to their saddle-bows to avoid encountering the branches from the larger trees, or brushing against the smaller bushes which grew on the sides. Vernon would now have willingly changed his light linen garments for the comfortable cloth ones in which Tomlins was dressed ; for the trees, loaded with a heavy rain-like dew, showered it down on being shaken, soon wetting him to the skin. The air, more rarified as they ascended, grew cool and chilly, and the rapid transition from the heat below to this cold atmosphere, was really painful. On gaining the summit of the first ridge of hills, the whole of the flat plain of Liguanea, to the Red Hills on the further side of Spanish Town, spread out beneath them like

a map. The red-shingled roofs of Kingston resembled, at this distance (about ten miles), a brick-kiln without smoke. The narrow long line of the palisadoes, overgrown with mangroves, looked like an immense green water-snake floating in the sea, the head of which seemed formed by the town of Port Royal. The inlet off the furthest point might be supposed to be the mouth; and, with the assistance of a little imagination, the masts of the shipping resembled most formidable teeth. The white foam of the breakers, which were dashing against the rocky Keys off the palisadoes, was just distinguishable; and farther out all was sea to the horizon. Running parallel with the level summit of the hill on which the party were now halting to breathe their horses, a chain of heights extended almost as far as the eye could reach, surrounding the plain with a complete amphitheatre. Above them a succession of mountains rose till their heights were lost in the clouds. After winding some way along the tops of these hills, the road descended into a deep valley, separating this from the next chain.

The precipitous descent down the narrow stony pathway seemed very hazardous. It was here and there intersected by the numerous streams of water which gush out from the sides of all the mountains in the interior of Jamaica. For a few yards the road was quite washed away, presenting not an inch of level ground, masses of soil from the bank above having fallen across it. The horses scrambling over these declivities sunk at every plunge up to their knees, and rolled down a quantity of earth and stones into the valley beneath.

On arriving at the ravine, the road followed for about a mile the side of a mountain river. The stream was now comparatively small, but the width and the depth of its nearly empty channel, showed to what a size it swelled in the rainy season. Its clear water ran brawling down its stony bed, and seemed boiling and foaming with indignation at not being able to move the large rocks which then obstructed its way; but when it swelled to its full tide, rolled down before it, to the imminent danger of all who might attempt to cross it. The banks were shaded with orange and lime-

trees, bending beneath the load of their golden fruit; and the air was perfumed with the spicy pimento, or pungent citron-blossom. Thickets of guava bushes were full of their luscious fruit; and from the midst of these humbler trees, the aspiring mountain cabbage, or palm-tree, rose high with its long straight slender stem, surmounted by its umbrella-like head, sheltering those who took refuge beneath it from the mid-day sun, and producing an agreeable current of air below, by the constant waving of its fan-like leaves. Flocks of paroquets, and other birds of gay plumage, were feasting greedily on the ripe fruit of the spreading mango-trees. Numbers of humming-birds flew from blossom to blossom, extracting the honey and insects on which they subsist, and displaying their glossy plumage in the sun, shining with all the colours of the rainbow, and appearing to vary every instant as the bird hovers fluttering in the air, inserting its long bill between the petals of each blossom.

The ravine narrowed as they proceeded, and instead of being covered with wood, the mountain on the farther side of the stream rose in

hanging cliffs. Huge broken disjointed masses of rock, undermined by the river in its flooded state, seemed tottering over the travellers' heads. In many places an enormous island of rock, the original station of which, high in the cliffs above, could yet easily be discovered, appeared recently to have rolled down, the traces of its track yet remaining, and now dammed up the course of the water, forming a deep basin behind it. The sides of the glen gradually approached each other, and each became steeper. Perpendicular cliffs of a dark grey stone rose on each side, some partially covered with the brushwood, which took root in every cleft, and some projecting their bold bare masses over the path. The narrow channel of the river was more and more obstructed by the fragments which had fallen, and the turbulent water forced its noisy way through them in a succession of small falls. A little further on towards the head of the glen, the opposite cliffs appeared to unite, precluding all farther progress. The ravine seemed to terminate in inaccessible cliffs, and the rivulet rushing from its sources, yet higher up in the

mountains, came tumbling down in a long sheet of foam and spray. The incessant roar of the fall echoing back from cliff to cliff, resounded far down the narrow glen, and was quite stunning when approached.

Vernon, after gazing at the wild scene before him, asked Cæsar, who had just come up with him, how it was possible to get on any farther.

"Me show massa de pass," replied Cæsar, spurring on his mule down to the sunk channel of the river, which he crossed. Vernon followed, sinking up to his horse's girths at the first plunge; but after two or three stumbles over the unseen round stones in the bed of the water, his horse gained the opposite side, and climbed up the bank. On getting round a large rock, which, standing at the very foot of the cascade, was dripping with its spray, a narrow path, almost as steep as a staircase, and not more than from three to four feet in breadth, presented itself. This hazardous pass Cæsar ascended, forcing his mule into a sort of plunging gallop, and rolling down a shower of loose stones at every step. The narrow track

was cut out of the rock on the right side, while the precipice on the left, unfenced even by a rail, presented to the traveller's view all the dangers of a single false step. Vernon attempted to follow his servant, and on reaching the first turn of the corkscrew-like ascent of the road, ventured to look down as his horse rounded the corner. He was about half way up the cliff, and the tremendous depth of the precipice below him, the giddy appearance of the fall of the water, rushing headlong down past him, and the consciousness of the narrowness of the ledge of rock on which his horse stood, turned his head. All swam before him, and he appeared to be falling himself, together with the foam on which his eyes rested. He had presence of mind enough to shut his eyes, and trust to his horse, who, accustomed to the kind of road, doubled the corner. As soon as there was sufficient breadth of road to allow of it, he dismounted, and led his horse up the remaining ascent of the pass, until the road widened, and lay again between thick forests.

At a considerably higher elevation they

arrived at the first cleared land which they had met with since they left the plain of Liguanea. It was a small estate. They first reached a plaintain walk, and after passing through this, next arrived at a coffee piece. The coffee was planted in regular straight lines, the bushes about four feet apart, and from three to five feet in height; in shape, though of a larger size, much resembling gooseberry-bushes, the coffee-tree being pruned to spread out its branches to the sun in the same way. The berries were just ripening, turning from a green to a bright red colour, and resembled cherries, though of a smaller size : each branch of the bushes was covered with berries shining through the dark laurel green of the leaves.

Vernon rode first, and Tomlins, seizing an opportunity when he was out of hearing, rode up to Cæsar, and desired him to say nothing to his master respecting the cause of his being sent to the workhouse, and nothing about Clara, whose behaviour, on that condition, he would excuse, and that he would then befriend them both.

" Hi," replied Cæsar, " me tell massa already."

" Curse you ! " replied Tomlins ; " how dared you mention the subject ? "

" What was me to tell massa den, when nim ask me why Missa M'Kenzie send me to de workhouse ? Me tell massa de truth, " said the negro.

" And you shall pay for it, by G—d ; and so shall Clara, if she can't hold her tongue."

" Hi, Missa Tomlins," said Cæsar, whose shrewd observation had already discovered that the manager did not stand high in his employer's favour ; " me no 'fraid for you now ; Massa Vernon take Clara's part."

" You insolent black scoundrel," said Tomlins, aiming with his whip a blow at Cæsar, who dodged, and urged on his mule to rejoin his master. Here the overseer dared not touch him, but rode sulkily behind planning vengeance.

The road, still ascending, now lay between alternate coffee estates and forest, till at length a thick fog, sometimes encircling them, and

sometimes driven before them by the wind, showed that they had reached the region of clouds.

Soon after, they arrived at a small low railing which passed across the road, and having removed the two upper bars, leaped their horses over the remaining three, when Mr. Tomlins begged to give Vernon joy on having arrived on his own territory.

"You are now within the bounds of Mount Edwards, sir," said he.

"Is there much of this uncleared land yet, Mr. Tomlins? I perceive we are still surrounded by wood."

"Oh, sir, this is chiefly provision-ground; the coffee pieces are about a mile further, on the other side of this hill."

"But I see no trace of cultivation," said Vernon.

"Do you not perceive, sir, here and there a cleared space, where they have burned down the trees, covered with large green leaves?"

"Yes; a large leaf of the size of a dock leaf, with an arrow head."

" Well, sir, those are ground plaintains ; the root is even larger than that of a yam."

" What are those vines which are climbing up sticks planted for them, like French beans ? "

" Those are yams, sir."

" But here are no fences ; nothing to mark the boundary between one negro's property and another's ; the whole seems planted here and there in the midst of the high wood as if it grew there wild, without any attempt at regularity or order."

" Yes, sir ; but they know amongst themselves to whom every root belongs, and they have no occasion for fences, as no instance occurs of one negro robbing another. They plunder only from us. And as to choice of ground, that is solely directed by the goodness of the soil. A negro burns away the wood wherever he thinks the ground richest, and never plants twice in the same place."

" And are they permitted to do this to any extent, and wherever they please ? "

" Yes, on an estate like this, sir, where three-fourths of the lands are in uncleared

useless wood. Then should you choose at any time to bring any part of their provision-ground into cultivation for coffee, you of course root out the provisions, and take the ground. We shall soon arrive at some land that I have been clearing; it was nearly all taken up with their provision-grounds before."

"And what became of the negroes' yams and plaintains?"

"Why, I was forced to root them out, to be sure."

"And what you so destroyed, was it general property, or the sole provision of a few?"

"It belonged, sir, to about six families."

"And what did they do, then?"

"Oh, that was their look out. Borrowed from the others, I suppose, sir, till they could raise fresh provisions somewhere else."

"No provision is ever furnished them from the store, is there?"

"None, sir, excepting a small present which each negro receives at Christmas, together with their yearly suit of clothes."

"And a negro is supposed to support himself solely from what he can produce himself."

"Yes, sir; and many raise a great superfluity, which they carry on Sunday to dispose of at Kingston Market."

"When are they allowed time for their own work on these provision-grounds?"

"Every Sunday, sir; and, alternately, every whole or every half Saturday."

"And this permission, then, to cultivate these waste woods for themselves on one day and a half, or two days in the week, is the only remuneration which they get for their other entire five days' labour in my service? And yet even this has been taken from some of them, who have been compelled to root out the fruits of their own labour to make room for my coffee bushes. Mr. Tomlins, those negroes whose grounds have been destroyed must be repaid by an equivalent supply of provision or money."

"Very well, sir," replied the overseer, "you can order what you please, sir, of course —but had *I* done so, Mr. M'Kenzie would have objected to my accounts."

They had now arrived at the first coffee pieces; and the overseer was proud, he said,

to call Vernon's attention to the thriving appearance of the bushes, loaded with their coral berries, and completely cleared from weeds. Vernon could not avoid acknowledging the truth of this.

"It appears, as far as I am a judge, to do you great credit, Mr. Tomlins," said he. "But what is that noise I hear, echoing from the hill opposite, like the report of a pistol?"

"Nothing, sir," answered Tomlins, coolly, "but the driver's whip."

"And what does he make that noise with it for?"

"Only to encourage the negroes at their work, sir."

"There it is again! I trust, Mr. Tomlins, that every one of those lashes does not fall on one of my slaves."

"Oh no, sir — only when they want it; but we have a very good driver, and he keeps them strictly to it. Nothing like good military discipline, I always say, Mr. Vernon, for carrying on business."

"Good discipline, Mr. Tomlins, is as excellent a thing," answered Vernon, "as tyranny is a hateful one."

Tomlins bowed with an uneasy grimace, not knowing what to answer. They soon arrived at the spot where the gang were working. They were ranged in one rank, about six feet apart, hoeing up the weeds amongst the coffee bushes; the men and women intermingled, and the latter working as hard as the former. Many of the men, and some of the women, were naked from the waist upwards. The men wore a sort of blue coarse cloth trowser, the women a petticoat of the same materials, some with and some without the further addition of an upper garment. They were all bare-footed. Their naked backs shone with perspiration from their labour; while the driver, one of the strongest-looking fellows amongst them, did nothing but walk up and down behind the whole line, with a consequential air of office, smacking his whip every five or ten minutes.

Under a spreading cedar-tree, which had been left standing on the side of the road, sat an old woman who had the office of cook for the whole party; under her superintendance each family had its separate "pot," or mixture

of yams and plaintains, seasoned with a small piece of salt fish, simmering over a small fire kindled in the centre of a circle of stones, which served for a grate. The old woman had at the same time the care of about a dozen chubby-faced children, who were lying together naked on a mat spread in the shade of the tree, while their mothers were working in the gang.

Vernon was glad to find that he was not known, and stopped his horse to watch the proceedings of the whole party. In a minute or two he saw the driver give a blow with his cattle whip to a young negro who had stopped working for an instant, while talking to his next neighbour. He received one lash, and scarcely flinching from its smart, went on with his work without uttering a cry.

As the negro had been guilty of a moment's inattention, Vernon did not interfere, but waited, watching their further movements. The driver, not knowing who the strange Buchra was, and well aware how best to recommend himself to Mr. Tomlins, continued urging on the set.

A young woman seemed unable to keep up with the exertions of the rest, but the moment the other line of labourers, less fatigued, got on before her, the driver cracked his whip behind her. At last she seemed unable to comply with these "encouragements," and evidently lagged behind the rest; though to Vernon, whose eye was on her, she appeared to be doing her best. Another crack — and then a blow. Tomlins, who had watched with an attentive eye the workings of Vernon's countenance, saw what game it was his interest to play. He snatched the whip from the driver, exclaiming, —

"Now you rascal, Brutus! have not I positively ordered you not to strike a negro without occasion? and never to overwork the people? Why Betsy was doing her best." At the same time he bestowed an admonitory blow, with the butt end of his own whip of office, on the astonished driver's head.

"Hi Massa!" said Brutus, with a look of wonder, "you no tell me toder day me for get dis coffee-piece all clear before you come back; and me for make de gang work hard?"

"Silence, sir," said Tomlins; "I did not tell you to overwork them."

During this expostulation the rest of the gang had stopped their work, staring with bewildered astonishment at the change in the overseer's disposition. "Hi! Massa Tomlins really good to-day! him take obi drink dis morning, and him bewitched," said the gang to each other. Cæsar alone comprehended the transaction, but having been enjoined by Vernon not to publish his arrival, was obliged to keep silence. After listening to several admonitions from Tomlins to the driver not to work the gang beyond their strength, or make too free a use of his whip, Vernon rode on towards the "great house," while the overseer endeavoured to follow up the merciful character which he had just assumed.

"A pity, sir, one cannot manage negroes without that cattle-whip and driver. I don't like it myself, but they won't work without it sir."

"I think I shall try the experiment, Mr. Tomlins."

" It won't do, it's not in the nature of them sir, to work without it."

" Why," replied Vernon, " you tell me that in the day and a half, or two days in the week, which is allowed to the slaves to cultivate their own provision grounds, they work so industriously as not only to raise provision to supply themselves, but even to sell. They have not then I presume a driver to 'encourage' them by smacks of the whip."

" No, sir, but some of them are so lazy that they will not do even that " (looking behind him, and observing that Cæsar had struck off in a different direction towards the hospital). " There's that Cæsar whom you brought with you from the Kingston workhouse, where Mr. M'Kenzie, who knew his character, had put him ; nothing ever could induce the rascal to work even for himself. Instead of that he took to thieving, and robbed the book-keeper here, Mr. Williams, of all his poultry, and then ran away to town when he found himself suspected. He told Mr. M'Kenzie, I understand, a different story, but he knew him too well to be deceived."

"And he told me too a very different story," said Vernon.

"Oh, no doubt, they have all of 'em a plausible story ready, anything but the truth, especially when that tells against them. I dare say the fellow has belied me to you, they are always glad to invent anything against their manager. But you, sir, I am sure, will not allow yourself to be imposed upon. Ask Mr. Williams, sir; he'll tell you all about it."

"Mr. Williams is a book-keeper here is he?"

"Yes, sir, and a very attentive useful lad. It is a pity that he is no scholar, and can't write, or he would be fit to take the management of an estate."

"And yet you call him a book-keeper: does he not keep the books on the estate?"

"No, sir, his business is to walk over the estate, to see that the different gangs are well employed, or attend to the mill when the crop is gathered. — But there are the negro houses, sir, and further on the works, the barbicue's and the overseer's house."

A small rivulet, whose source was at the top

of the mountain, ran down the side of the road, passing through the negro village. The houses, or rather the huts, of the negroes were composed entirely of a compact wattling, made from the pliant shoots of a tree something resembling a willow. They were of various sizes, from twelve to eighteen feet square, and from ten to fifteen feet high, including the roof; the larger huts divided into two chambers, and all thatched with long dried grass, or the leaves of the mountain-cabbage tree. They were built without windows or chimney, though a fire is constantly kept burning at night, the smoke escaping through the crevices of the wattling, a small door being the only opening. This construction is adopted partly for the sake of warmth at night, the only time when a negro is in his cabin, but especially as a security against theft; his whole property being left in his hut when he and his family are in the field. The huts composed an irregular circle, through the centre of which the road passed. Most of them had a small fence, enclosing a sort of garden around them, planted with fruit trees. Some of the most opulent

families had a pig and a hen-coop filled with poultry within this enclosure.

Vernon had often heard his West Indian friends exult over the superiority of the negro houses, to the cottages of the English poor, and looked disappointedly at these wretched huts, which seemed rather to merit the name of large hampers than houses.

A little further on they came to the works, or the machinery which is employed to separate the exterior pulp of the coffee berry from the seed within. Externally they had the appearance of a common water-mill in England. A little farther on was the overseer's comfortable looking house, and behind it two long barn-like buildings intended for store-houses. Arranged like terraces one below the other, opposite to the works, were the three barbicues on which the coffee is exposed to dry in the sun, previous to its being taken to the pulping mill. After ascending about half a mile further up the mountain, the travellers at length arrived at the principal mansion, "Mount Edward's great house." It was now half-past ten o'clock, and they had been four hours on their road.

A large grove-like garden surrounded the house, which stood on the level top of the mountain. It was roomy and comfortable, and on entering the breakfast-parlour, tired with riding, and not a little hungry, Vernon threw himself down on the sofa, and watched, with no little interest, the arrangement for a substantial Jamaica breakfast.

CHAPTER IV.

Refreshed by rest, by an excellent breakfast, but above all by the mountain air, Vernon mounted a small creole pony belonging to the estate, and, accompanied by Tomlins, set off to make a tour of the whole of his domain. The coffee pieces in every direction were full of berries, and in the most thriving state. The crop was so forward that the pickninny gang (the children) had begun to gather the ripe berries. After having ridden round the whole estate, Vernon desired to be shown the hospital. It was a small building, and too crowded for its size. Cæsar had been there already to visit his wife. She was now convalescent, and but for the humane interference of Dr. M'Nalty, the surgeon of the estate, would have been compelled to resume her labours in the field.

Cæsar, though he had observed secrecy everywhere else, yet in order to account for his liberation, and perhaps unable to conceal from her so important an event, had told his

wife of Vernon's arrival, and of his interference between him and the negro-driver at the workhouse, and that this "good massa" had come to stay at the great house, and redress all their grievances. Clara's joy and gratitude were unbounded, and on Vernon's entering the hospital, she, and all those whom illness did not confine to their beds, stood up to receive him. Fixing her eyes on her young master, till she caught his, she threw herself across his way as he was moving through the chamber, and exclaimed: —

"Tank you! tank you, my massa! God bless you for taking my husband out of de workhouse!"

"Ah said Vernon, stopping immediately," is that Cæsar's wife? What is your name?"

"Clara, massa."

Tomlins fearing a further explanation interposed, "Yes, sir, she is wife to the young man who accompanied us: foolish anxiety for him, when he was caught and sent to the workhouse, brought on the fever from which she is now recovering."

"No hear him! no believe him massa,"

interrupted Clara, "him lie! him lie! massa it da beating him give me because me no would leave my husband for go live with him, dat make me sick! Massa, Cæsar neber run 'way — only go beg for me — oh, massa, missa Tomlins bad man! him cruel Buckra!"

"Do you know anything of this matter?" said Vernon, turning round to Williams the book-keeper, who had followed him into the hospital.

"Sir," said Williams, "she does not tell the truth; her husband Cæsar was strongly suspected of committing a robbery, and, on being called to account for it, ran away. This young woman was then so insolent to Mr. Tomlins, that he of course ordered her to be punished."

"If I had not done so she would have bred an insurrection on the estate," said Tomlins.

"I am afraid Clara that your story proves a false one," said Vernon. At this moment Dr. M'Nalty entered the hospital.

"Have I," asked he, the pleasure of seeing Mr. Vernon. My name is M'Nalty. I am surgeon to the estate."

" Yes, sir, my name is Vernon."

" Oh, doctor, good Massa M'Nalty," interrupted Clara, " Massa Vernon no believe me when me tell him how da 'busher use me ; him tell lie 'pon me and Cæsar, and Massa Vernon believe him."

" Silence for the present," said Vernon ; then turning to M'Nalty, continued, " I am most happy, sir, to meet you here ; this is my first visit to my property. But I am grieved to see it so crowded with sick."

" Yes, sir ; for the number of negroes on it, this estate, I am sorry to say, has had more sick on it than any other I attend."

" And to what do you attribute this, sir ? "

" Really, Mr. Vernon, I scarcely know how to answer that question ; but, on the whole, I think it is my duty as a Christian, though, perhaps, bad policy as a Jamaica practitioner, to state the whole truth to you. Accompany me now, while I show you the different patients I have here, and I will tell you what I know of their cases."

Here M'Nalty lowered his voice, so as not to be overheard by the surrounding negroes.

"Observe that old man lying in the corner; he was, I understand, one of the most useful slaves on the property, on which he has lived fifty years; he is now worn out with age. On my last visit I ordered him bark and wine; but this was not given; your overseer refusing it on the plea that his life was not worth preserving; that he was an incumbrance to the estate, and that the sooner he died the better. The three women next are all recovering from child-birth. I must beg that they may not be ordered too soon back to field labour. You lost last week a very valuable woman, together with her child, by my orders on this point not being regarded. On the other side are a young man in a decline, I believe, from over-work, and an old man very ill from over-punishment. The two next are cases of fever from cold. Do you observe that woman on the other side? She is dying of a decline. Continued ill usage induced her to run away to the woods. The maroons brought her back, half-starved, with a bad cough, and her lungs affected; she will not recover."

Vernon heard many more similar cases of

misery and suffering, most of which could be traced to the overseer's want of humanity. He was sick at heart; for he felt that these poor people were under his protection, and that henceforward he was responsible for their happiness and their lives.

"One more question," he added — when with Dr. M'Nalty he left the hospital, and joined Mr. Tomlins, who was waiting for him in no agreeable mood outside — "is Clara's story true?"

"I believe it is, sir," replied M'Nalty. "As you ask me I will not conceal from you that I believe that poor woman to have been grossly ill-treated by your manager: I say so to his face; he cannot deny it."

"You hear how Dr. M'Nalty contradicts your former assertions, Mr. Tomlins. What answer have you now to make? Can you offer to palliate the acts of cruelty and injustice which I have had this morning forced on my notice, and which I could not have believed to have been possible, if I had not investigated them myself."

"Captain Vernon," replied Tomlins, with a

bullying air, as he perceived his chance of retaining his place was over, — " I don't care what so weak a man, as your conduct proves you to be, may think of me. You have addressed me in too ungentleman-like a manner for me to remain on this estate. So I shall not waste my time in attempting to undeceive you. As for you, Dr. M'Nalty, I will take care that your conduct shall be well known, and that you shall not be admitted as a spy to belie and ruin any other honest man. My friend Mr. M'Kenzie will not let me long want a situation."

" Sir," said Vernon, in a cooler tone, " you have saved me the trouble of discharging you. The sooner you leave Mount Edwards the better."

" And sirrah! how dare you accuse me of falsehood!" said M'Nalty, his highland blood mounting to his face with wrath; " recant that, sir, or,"—and he held high his horsewhip. The ex-overseer, who was already mounted, put spurs to his mule; receiving, however, one vigorous blow from M'Nalty's whip as he passed, muttering something about satisfaction.

The news of Vernon's arrival had in the mean time spread over the estate, and it being now the respite from work, the negroes' dinner hour, nearly all had assembled round the hot-house door to see their new master. Most of these overheard their tyrant's dismission, and exulted with a yell of joy on seeing him decamp before the horsewhip of the doctor. "Wish massa joy!—hope massa come for lib here!——work hard for good massa!" were the salutations which poured in on Vernon from all sides. The contrast of their happy faces was delightful, after the scenes of misery which he had just witnessed. He thanked them for their welcome, assured them that if he met with good behaviour on their part, they should receive kind treatment from him. The rest of the afternoon he gave them as a holiday to celebrate his arrival, and directed some provisions and rum to be served out. M'Nalty, who was a well-informed, sensible man, spent the remainder of the day with him; and by the bright moonlight of the tropics (as they lounged about the garden, or sat in a citron bower at the extremity of a terraced walk which overhung the

negro village, inhaling, in long-drawn puffs, the grey smoke of a Havanna cigar,) Vernon witnessed the happiness which he had given to his black tenantry, who were dancing to the hollow music of the drum-like jumba, or celebrating the events of the day in songs, in which his name occasionally caught the ear.

The following days were actively employed by the young lord of Mount Edwards in bringing about a total change in the government of his vassals. Tomlins was replaced by a young Scotchman, a Mr. Donald Scott, whom Vernon engaged on the recommendation of Dr. M'Nalty, who had known him while attending professionally at an estate, the management of which, in consequence of its unhealthy situation, Mr. Scott had been forced to resign. Williams was also dismissed. The other book-keeper, Murphy, was retained on a further trial.

Vernon next collected all the whips, cowskins, chains, and other instruments of punishment; all which he directed to be locked up in the stores; and at a general assembly of the negroes on the property, convoked for this special purpose, told them, that it would depend on

their conduct whether they remained in the store, or were recommitted to the hands of the drivers. One single whip was kept out, and this was publicly delivered by Vernon to Scott, the new overseer, to be resorted to only under his direction, and in cases of gross misconduct. To replace their former insignia of office, each driver was provided with a long staff, like the wand of a constable. They were, as before, the superintendents of the gang, and were directed to report all cases of idleness or neglect to the bookkeeper or overseer ; who, if he judged it necessary, was to order the offender to confinement in the stocks, till a thorough investigation of his fault could take place, and a suitable punishment be awarded.

As soon as the new system seemed to be understood, Vernon determined to go to Cane Garden, where, from all he had seen, he had reason to fear that he should find the same mismanagement. He might, perhaps, have got there by a shorter road than by returning to Kingston, but he wished to have an explanation with M'Kenzie, who had written to him expressing his astonishment at Tomlins's sudden

dismissal; and besides, it must be confessed, though he would hardly own it to himself, that a wish to see Julia Leslie again not a little influenced him. He had kept up a sort of correspondence with her, during the month he had remained at the mountains, by sending her presents of fruit and game, and her answers, written in a pretty female hand, confessed the sorrow which his absence occasioned, and how anxiously she hoped for his return.

Leaving then everything at Mount Edwards in a state of improvement, Vernon again decended to the lowlands, accompanied by Cæsar, whom he had promoted to the office of groom.

The change of climate was very oppressive, and he broke the journey by stopping to breakfast at camp on his way. He found M'Kenzie returned from the fatigues of the office, sleeping extended at his length on the sofa, while black Cupid was kneeling beside him with a large fan, with which he was both cooling his master's slumbers, and keeping off the swarms of musquitoes. As Vernon entered, Cupid ceased fanning for an instant, when a hungry musquito just lighted on M'Kenzie's nose, and then flew

off again; Cupid exclaiming, "Hi! me glad! da damn musquito burn him foot!"

Awoke by the noise which Vernon made, as he slided and floundered across the polished floor, after successive stretchings and yawnings, the merchant roused himself sufficiently to recognise his visitor; and, welcoming him with his usual cordiality, expressed his surprise at his having managed to exist so long alone at the mountains.

"Nay," replied Vernon; "I have had plenty of employment, I assure you; and I hope, too, of a very useful kind —"

"Oh, your new regulations, I suppose? yes, I have heard something of them; but you'll find in the end they won't succeed. And now, pray tell me (for you did not answer my letter) what had poor Tomlins done to occasion his sudden dismissal?"

"I should have written, had I not intended answering your inquiry in person. You can have no idea what a beast that man is — of his brutality, cruelty, injustice, and gross mismanagement of the slaves, — or you would not have allowed him to continue so long on an estate under your superintendence."

"Depend upon it, Mr. Vernon, you are deceived, and have allowed yourself to be imposed on by the lies which the Negroes are always telling. You are a young hand, sir, and are not up to their tricks. They tell such plausible stories, that I don't wonder they have turned your young Quixotic head."

"No, sir, I cannot be deceived; for my principal evidence was derived from Dr. M'Nalty, the surgeon who attends the estate."

"Ay, Tomlins told me some story of that kind. He says M'Nalty has long owed him a grudge (they were rivals for some black Venus); and so M'Nalty took the first opportunity of prejudicing you against Tomlins, and insulted him in your presence."

"I assure you, Mr. M'Kenzie, I witnessed too much myself of the system of oppression which was going on, and the dreadful effects of it in the hospital, to have the slightest doubt left of Tomlins's character and conduct."

"Well, well, my good friend, don't get in a passion! Your dismissing him from Mount Edwards is rather convenient to me than

otherwise; for I was in want of an overseer at Mount Prospect, and he just does for the situation. They are a bad set, the negroes there; and a tight hand like Tomlins will keep them in some order, I hope."

"Good God, sir! don't for an instant think of employing that wretch again. You can have no conception of the horrid cruelties which will be perpetrated under your authority."

"Nay, now don't, pray, my dear sir, mount your high horse again. Do be reasonable; for what is it to you? Mount Prospect is not yours; and I cannot but believe I must tell you that you have allowed yourself to be imposed on by stories which you have taken for gospel. Tomlins is a strict hand, I know he is; and therefore is just the proper person for Mount Prospect. He always kept his accounts with me very correctly, and saved me a great deal of trouble; and I am under obligations to him for other little civilities. Now I see you are going to break out again; but pray be quiet! You'll change these opinions of yours in time. How did Springer carry

you? Do you continue to like your purchase?"

Finding it useless to stand forth any longer, as the champion of humanity against the merchant's deep-rooted prejudices, after conversing with him for a short time on common-place topics, and receiving a general invitation, whenever he was disengaged during his stay at Kingston, Vernon took his leave, and soon found himself before Mrs. Leslie's house. The door, as usual, was open, and Vernon, unannounced and unperceived, found Julia alone, in evident uncontrollable distress. As soon as she saw him, her face lit up with a gleam of pleasure; but the emotion was transient, and very soon her looks relapsed into their former expression, while her nervous voice and absent manner betrayed anxiety and suffering.

"Julia," said Vernon, "I am grieved to see the state I find you in. What can have occurred to make you look so changed, and so wretched? Do tell me; for perhaps it may be possible for me to assist you."

"Oh, Captain Vernon, I have been so miserable. Mamma has been so unkind to me about

that Mr. Anderson; he has been here every day since you left us, and persecutes me with his offers of houses and negroes; and then mamma, when he is gone, frightens me, by threatening to force me into living with him; and, dependent as I am, how can I refuse or escape?"

"Julia," replied Vernon, "I can offer you a much easier remedy; nay do not sigh so, and shake your head. In short, instead of Mr. Anderson, accept the offer of one who really appreciates and loves you. I can remove you at once out of the reach of your persecutors."

The materials from which this narrative has been formed contain no more of the details of the courtship. All that we can tell the reader with certainty is, that it was ultimately arranged that Vernon should go alone to Cane Garden, and that Julia should follow him under Cæsar's escort.

CHAPTER V.

Cane Garden bordered on Anatto Bay, on the north side of the island, which is narrow between that bay and Kingston, the distance not exceeding thirty miles. The road passes through a sort of chasm in the central ridge of mountains, and, as it encounters no very steep ascents, presents none of the scenery of the more mountainous districts. The most striking view on the whole road is from the top of Stony Hill, on the summit of which are barracks for seven hundred men. Stony Hill is nine miles from Kingston, perhaps the plain of Liguanea is no where seen with so good an effect. From the heights of the Port Royal mountains the distance makes it resemble a map, here it is a picture. Immediately below the precipitous descent of the wooded sides of Stony Hill, the eye rests on the green sugar-cane fields of Constant-Spring sugar estate. On each side projecting flanks of the

hill shut in the view as in a frame ; further down is a wide expanse of savanna, terminating in the villa-like grounds of Up Park Camp. The troops were then at their early parade, and, even at this distance, the gleam of the morning sun was strongly reflected from a line of nearly two thousand bayonets. The town, harbour, and shipping terminated the prospect. The Stony Hill barracks were then occupied by detachments of the * * * and * * * regiments, and while he called on an acquaintance in the latter regiment, he was pleased to observe the ruddy European looks of the soldiers quartered in this lofty and cool situation. There was not a single case of fever then in Stony Hill hospital, but numbers of the men suffered severely from wounds in the feet, occasioned by a sort of poisonous thorn which grows in the woods around. The Irish soldiers of the * * * regiment had built small mud huts round the hill, in which, with his wife, his children, and his pig, and surrounded by a flourishing potatoe ground, Pat found himself almost as comfortable as if his cabin had been on the skirts of the Bog of Allen.

On the other side of Stony Hill the road follows the Wagwater river course, crossing it at least twenty times. Heavy rains render it impassable. Even now the water at many of the fords reached up to the saddle girths. After a fatiguing, and not very interesting ride, Vernon reached Cane Garden late in the day.

The estate was situated in a low narrow swampy valley, running northward towards the sea, and embayed on all sides by hill. The land, enriched by soil washed down from the hills above, was very productive. The sugar cane thrives best in such a marshy situation. A running stream of water passed through the centre of the cane fields, with diverging channels, by which, if in order, the whole estate could be flooded in a dry season. They were now filling up from neglect. The gathering in of the crop had commenced, and as Vernon rose through the cane pieces, he saw the gangs of negroes at work cutting the canes with sickles, and carrying them to the works. No ringing of whips annoyed him as he passed through the fields, but he noticed the quantity of rank weeds amidst the canes, and the irregular way in which

the negroes worked, scattered here and there, instead of keeping together in gangs.

The "great house" was situated at about the centre of the estate, fronting the sea, and as Vernon rightly conjectured, in a most unhealthy spot. The works and overseer's house were close by. In the latter Vernon found the manager, Mr. Smith, a bloated sleepy looking old man, who was sitting in the gallery, his feet resting on the table before him, smoking cigars, and drinking grog with the book-keeper.

"Welcome, sir, to Cane Garden," said Mr. Smith, as Vernon, after having sent up his name, entered the gallery, removing at the same time his feet from their place of rest. "Hope you don't dislike the smell of tobacco: we are obliged to smoke here all day, the place is so sickly. I am sorry that you did not let me know when I might expect you, in order to have things more ready for you here. Allow me to show you the way to the 'great house.'"

The mansion appeared to have once really deserved the title, but had long been falling into decay. One wing was a ruin, and the other

partly unroofed, and the old costly furniture dropping to pieces from damp.

Vernon had breakfasted at Stony Hill, and it was now three in the afternoon, and finding there was no chance of dinner till seven or eight o'clock, after making a vain search through ten or fifteen furnished bed rooms for a dry bed, he at last threw himself down in his clothes on the best he could find, where, notwithstanding the swarms of musquitoes who found their way to him through the numerous rents in the musquito net, the fatigue and exhaustion of his ride enabled him to sleep soundly for three or four hours.

A good dinner, served on the broken ill matched remnants of what had been expensive china, succeeded. Time and neglect seemed to have injured every thing at Cane Garden but the wine. This, as it flowed clear and bright from the cobwebbed bottle, was most excellent.

The next day Vernon made the tour of the whole estate, accompanied, of course, by the overseer. Everywhere he discovered the traces of neglect and bad management. Rich fields either uncultivated, or the canes choked with

weeds ; fences destroyed and drains filled up ; the machinery at the mill in wretched order, and the sugar, which was now undergoing the process of curing, black and coarse grained, from the want both of proper utensils and of care in the process. The building in which the cured sugar was kept had lost some shingles from the roof, and partially admitted the rain, which, of course, spoiled or wasted the contents of the hogsheads on which it fell.

" Why, Mr. Smith," said Vernon, " I am astonished that you should not have discovered this opening in the roof. Nearly half of these three hogsheads of sugar has been destroyed by the rain ; and I suppose half a day's labour would have made all tight above."

" I really could not help it, sir, I am sure," answered Smith ; " our carpenter is in the hospital, from a fall he got by the steps of our ladder being rotten, and breaking with him as he was going up it to mend the roof of the boiling-house. He broke his arm, poor fellow, and has not been able to do a stroke of work since. And I have been promised, from day to day, the loan of the carpenter from our

neighbour, Mr. Jones's; but, somehow, they have a great deal of carpenter-work there too, and he has disappointed me. But I'll see, and send to him again."

"Is there no carpenter to be hired anywhere near, Mr. Smith?"

"No, sir; every estate has its own."

"But, at any rate, one could be obtained from Kingston, which, after all, is only a day's ride."

"Oh, sir, being promised Mr. Jones's carpenter, I never thought of that; and then, sir, our negroes are all so busy with the crop, I could not well spare a messenger."

"Why really, Mr. Smith, the sugar wasted here has cost the labour of several days to a hundred people. Surely that of one would have been well bestowed to have saved it."

A considerable quantity of rum had been lost in the same way, from a small leak in the receiver in the distillery-house, which Mr. Smith had not judged worth the expence of repairing, as the daily waste was small, and he had not calculated the amount in a year.

The hospital was not full: the cases were

chiefly those of fever and ague, the effects of the marshy climate. But the building itself was not waterproof, and must have let in rain on the patients. Far too much power appeared to Vernon to have been delegated by this indolent man to the book-keepers, who, being men of still lower origin, and more uneducated minds, were more likely to abuse it. But he had no reason to suppose that the slaves were ever wilfully ill-used by the good-natured overseer himself: they looked, on the whole, well and healthy. As the territory was not so extensive as at Mount Edwards, the negroes could not have the same extent of provision grounds, and a small daily ration of salt fish, which appeared to Vernon uneatable, though charged for in M'Kenzie's accounts as the best, was served out to them, with the occasional addition of some American flour; sometimes salt beef or pork, as bad and as highly charged, were substituted for the fish. The negroes call the salt fish, which generally consists of herrings in such a state, that, when a barrel is opened, its contents, all mixed up together, resemble hogswash in England, — "mash-

mash;" and the beef and pork they call "stinkee, stinkee." They, however, eat them both, making a sort of olla podrida of the whole, mixed with plantains, yams, flour, and Indian corn. It must be allowed that their "pot," as they call this mixture, often partakes too powerfully of the savour, or at least of the odour of the "stinkee stinkee" to be relished by an European.

Vernon's general conclusion was, that though injury had befallen the works from sheer neglect, and inattention had reduced both the quantity and the quality of the crop; yet, as the negroes, the most important part of the whole, appeared in a thriving state, much less evil had occurred by the non-residence of the owner at Cane Garden than at Mount Edwards; and this, putting feelings of duty and humanity out of the question; but admitting them, the contrast was so strong, that, notwithstanding his indolence, he determined to retain Smith on further trial, and see if, when he himself had got things into a better train, the overseer might not be urged by frequent visits to keep them so. He resolved, too, to adapt to Cane

Garden the regulations which appeared to be succeeding at Mount Edwards.

Cæsar arrived in the afternoon, bringing with him Julia Leslie.

"You see I have kept my promise, Mr. Vernon," said she, as on dismounting from her horse, she accepted his assistance.

"My dear Julia," answered he, as he placed her on the ground, "I here renew my promises to you—you never shall repent the confidence you are now placing in me."

"Ah, so you now believe; but will you tell me this a year hence? I hope so, or I should not be now here. But sometimes I cannot get over my fears that you will love some buckra lady, and then desert your poor Julia."

How long this honey-moon conversation might have lasted is uncertain, as it was abruptly interrupted by Cæsar's putting a parcel into his master's hands, telling him, "Massa, da packet come in yesterday evening, Missa M'Kenzie send Massa him letters."

"What's this," said Vernon, opening the bundle of letters. "Pshaw! from Greenwood and Cox. Oh, one from our major—that may

keep till to-morrow. Ah! one from my sister!" and throwing the others aside, Vernon tore open a long letter crossed and recrossed in a female hand. We will take a liberty which Julia then longed to do—look over his shoulder while he reads it.

"Bath, April 7. 1813.

"My dear Charles,

"I hope this will find you safely landed at Jamaica, but I shall be very anxious till I hear the glad tidings of your being so. I never hear the wind whistle, but I think of you with fear and trembling; and I never see a newspaper but I dread to look at the shipping intelligence.

"We have been going on much in the same way as when you were with us. Bath is, if possible, still gayer and fuller. I meet in my morning's walk with my aunt to the pump-room still more numerous strings of dandies parading from Milsom Street to the Crescent, still whiskered, spurred, and coated *à la militaire*. Do your Jamaica beaux resemble them? Or have you no dandies there? Your friend, Captain Myers, still maintains his pre-eminence;

and amongst the various novelties which he is pleased to divert us with, has lately amused himself by adopting a new mode of tying his neckcloth every day, and seeing the yesterday's tie copied from him on each successive morning's lounge, and circulating amongst the subalterns; but Bath has always been the paradise of dandies. What provokes me is the evident satisfaction which many of my young friends feel, if a monkey of this kind condescends to join them. I have several times seen two or three additional turns taken on the Crescent on Captain Myers honouring them with his company, by girls who had professed themselves quite tired of their stupid walk, and just going home half an hour before. But enough of him, you will say; my aunt goes out almost every evening, somewhere or other. But these endless routs are all very same and stupid. We are going to-night to the rooms, so I must leave off now to dress for dinner."

"Tuesday, 8th April.

"Oh, Charles, I have heard such a piece of news, such good news for you. Not to keep

you in suspense, know then that I met my old friend and school-fellow, Emily Vivian, at the rooms last night, and she tells me that her father, the General, is just appointed to the Jamaica staff, and will go out immediately. And (here comes my good news) he takes out Mrs. Vivian and Emily with him; they cannot part from an only daughter. You saw Emily, I recollect, just before you left us on your first visit to Portugal. She and I were then both school girls; and though your head, Charles, was too full of your regimentals, of Lord Wellington, and heaven knows how many more military ideas, still I recollect you admired my young friend more than I could have expected under those circumstances, and she is now wonderfully improved, both in mind and person. She was evidently the belle of the rooms last night; as I was there, Charles, you must give my humility credit for the confession. Shall I confess that I have been castle-building as to your meeting? As they are distant connections of ours, and her father is very hospitable, and you are not likely to have much good society in Jamaica, you must see a

great deal of her. Besides, I have a thousand more reasons, only I have no room to tell them to you now. Indeed it will puzzle you to make out part of this letter crossed as it already is.

"Adieu, dearest Charles,

"Ever your affectionate Sister,

"HARRIET VERNON."

"My aunt desires her love, and her thanks for your last remittance, and begs that you will take care and not get a fever by going too much in the sun, or getting your feet wet.

"Adieu, again,

"H. V."

"I am pretty certain that your castles will fall to the ground this time," thought Vernon, as he finished deciphering this long epistle; glancing his eye at the same moment on the living refutation of his sister's schemes, who was patiently resting on the sofa, her black eyes fixed on his as they ran along the lines.

During the following month, Vernon set actively to work to bring the estate into better order. But though the evils were less mis-

chievous than those of Mount Edwards, they were less remediable. It is easier to cut the string of an over-bent bow, than to bend one, which, from long disuse, has lost its shape. Innumerable were the obstacles and trials of temper which he met with. It is very difficult to alter the habits of any person, but especially of a negro, accustomed to be used as a walking, hoeing, and sugar-making machine, and to go through the same routine of labour day after day. The very changes of government which Vernon intended for the relief of the slaves, were matters of complaint to the stupidity or perverse temper of some of the negroes; and, as they were almost all without religion, and nearly without moral feelings, they could only be governed by force, or by self-interest; and, in many instances, although he felt convinced that mismanagement existed, his short experience as a planter did not enable him to detect it.

None of the proprietors resided on the neighbouring estates; and their substitutes, being all low vulgar men, Vernon had no society but Julia's. Though she would not formally take

her place at the dinner-table, yet she would stay in the room when there was no other white person present; and sometimes take a seat, when the desert was introduced. She never, however, made her appearance before a third person; not from any sense of degradation as to the situation she filled, for that situation, according to the notions in which she had been brought up, was an honourable one; but solely from custom, and a feeling of inferiority, originating in colour—a feeling so inherent in all her class as to be acted upon unconsciously.

Always in good spirits and good humour, she amused him with her lively conversation, abounding chiefly in anecdotes of the Kingston merchants, the governor, or the lawyers at Spanish Town; or of what she had seen when residing at Up Park Camp.

And Vernon, who liked to speculate on the difference of society, under different systems of government, found a new feature in the unbounded libertinism which seemed openly avowed in Jamaica by all ranks amongst the Europeans. She possessed a *naïveté*, height-

ened by a great deal of humour and power of mimickry, which added much to the effect of her stories. Often when, after having been a whole morning out in the field, Vernon returned heated and tired, and perhaps out of temper besides, Julia wiped his forehead with her handkerchief, fanned him as he lay on the sofa, mixed his lemonade, or, romping about him with a sort of kittenish playfulness, forced him to resume his good humour. Watching every glance of his eye, every movement of his countenance, she anticipated his wishes before he could speak them; and, mixing familiarity with the most ardent love, her heart and mind were wholly his. Vernon, in return, felt gratitude for her affection, and his self-love not a little flattered by finding himself the object of adoration to so fine a creature. And if these feelings did not amount to love, they so nearly resembled it that he was himself deceived.

"Julia," said Vernon, throwing himself on the sofa, as he returned from the field one close day, "Julia, I have a sad headache, and feel more languid and tired than I ever recollect before."

"Good God, how heated your skin feels! and how fast your pulse beats! Oh dear, I am afraid, Charles, you have got the fever."

"No, I hope not; but I have a strange pain in my back and shoulders."

"Indeed, you must see a doctor immediately; but I don't know where the nearest lives; far off, I fear. I will run to Mr. Smith's, and get him to send; and also get some calomel from him. You must take a dose immediately."

"Well, my dear Julia, I will take anything you give me."

A messenger was despatched to the nearest medical practitioner, a Dr. Hayter, who lived ten miles off. Meanwhile, Vernon's headache increased rapidly; he could feel, and fancied that he could hear the pulsation of the arteries of his temples, and at the back of his head.

On attempting to stand up, giddiness ensued; and, if Julia had not been close by to support him, he would have fallen.

At her entreaty he went to bed, feeling sensibly worse every minute. It was four hours from the time the messenger was des-

patched before the surgeon arrived, though he was fortunately at home when called for. He found his patient severely attacked by the most dangerous sort of island or yellow fever, brought on probably by the noxious vapours, the malaria, which, rising from the marshy lowland round Annatto Bay, is fatal to almost all Europeans who reside any length of time within its influence.

Vernon desired the surgeon to tell him what he thought of him.

"Sir," was the answer, "you are a newcomer, and a bad subject for this unhealthy place. I trust, however, that your youth and good constitution may enable you to get over this attack. At the same time, I confess that it is a serious one. It is fortunate that you took calomel, without waiting for me. If you had delayed, I think the fever would have gained such ground, that arresting it now would be next to impossible."

Vernon turned his eyes on Julia with a look which said, "Your precaution, then, has saved my life, if I recover." And he was right; for probably he would not otherwise have called in a

surgeon so soon, and certainly would not have known what immediate remedy to apply. Dr. Hayter bled him copiously; and the instant relief from the headache which oppressed him, as the blood spouted from his arm, seemed quite miraculous to the poor patient. The throbbing of the temples ceased, and the giddiness and pain left him altogether. He could only compare himself to Ladurlad, freed from Kehama's curse.

His relief was but temporary; in four hours the headache and fever returned with double violence, his pulse rising to 120. Pains succeeded in every bone, as if his very marrow was diseased. A constant restlessness would not permit him to sleep or remain an instant in one position. His temper, too, grew very irritable, so that he threw the phials containing his medicine at the heads of the servants who brought them; and no one but Julia dared to come near him. He even repulsed her soothing caresses, and, in return for the most affectionate nursing, while she watched by his side the whole night, told her she plagued and tor-

mented him, and ordered her in vain to leave him.

To a night passed in this way, the next morning delirium succeeded; and it was with difficulty that two strong men held him down. He was again bled, which carried off the delirium for a time. His whole body was then covered with large sheets of ice, brought from Kingston (wrapped in flannel to exclude the air) by a man on horseback. These were suffered to melt on his temples, but the heat of his blood was such, that they smoked as they dissolved. At length, after seventy hours passed without any intermission, the fever began to abate. Warm baths were then used to produce perspiration; they appeased the fever, but left the patient so exhausted that he could hardly be said to be alive, being unable either to move or to speak, and a death-like chilliness seized his extremities. While the fever continued he had been iced; he now wanted warmth, and therefore was covered with a blanket, and Julia was directed to pass a warm iron over him, as they iron linen,

while large quantities of unmixed brandy were poured down his throat.

In this situation, unable to give any sign of life, he overheard his physician, who thought him insensible, pronounce his death inevitable, as mortification had taken place, and direct that he should not be buried until his head had been opened, to ascertain the extent of inflammation in the membranes.

He was, however, mistaken; a refreshing sleep succeeded, and Vernon, on waking, found himself again able to speak; and though so weak and emaciated that he could not turn in bed, or move his hand to his mouth without assistance, yet the fever being gone and circulation restored, the crisis was past. His restoration still depended on the care taken of him. Though Julia had sat up three nights and days, and never left him for an instant, he could not prevail on her to quit him. Dr. Hayter told him afterwards, that if he had been left to the care of any one else, he must inevitably have died; that nothing but her constant attention, and her power of soothing his irritated temper, could have saved him. He,

of course, could not exclusively attend to him ; and even if he had been able to devote the whole of his time to one patient, he could not have remained so long without sleep. Julia's love had conquered nature itself.

" My dearest Julia," said Vernon, " can you forgive the return I have made you for saving my life ? While you were watching night after night without a moment's rest by my bed, I cannot bear to recollect the way in which I treated you. What a heavenly temper you must have to have borne with me."

" Oh, I am well repaid for it all by seeing you recover. I really, at one time, gave up all hopes of you. You know you are not the first Englishman whom I have nursed. And poor Mr. Ross was not so ill at the beginning of his fever as you were. As to your ill temper, Charles, all you buckra men are so, when you get very sick."

" Then you forgive me, Julia."

And while Julia stooped down, by way of reply, and kissed his pale face, Vernon could not help saying : — " Oh, Julia, how can I return this affection ? How can I deserve your

goodness to me? Do tell me how I can any way repay you."

"Never desert me!"

Vernon's convalescence was progressive, but very slow. It was a week before he could be moved from his bed to the sofa, even for a few hours. Another before he could walk alone. His spirits were exceedingly low, so low that now the danger was over, he almost wished that he had sunk under it. In this dependent situation he felt every hour the value of Julia's tenderness. He leant on her arm whenever he attempted to walk, and in his lowest ebb of spirits she often succeeded in diverting his attention either by reading or talking to him. Under her care we will for a while leave him.

CHAPTER VI.

We interrupt our narrative by another letter: —

Miss Vivian to Miss Vernon.

" Miss Burke's Lodging House,
Duke Street, Kingston, Jamaica,
1st October, 1813.

" You see that I keep my promise of writing my journal, for my dear Harriet, the first spare moment I have had since we landed, which was only four days ago. We had on the whole a very favourable passage; and mamma and myself proved better sailors than we expected. Even my father complimented me; and told me, during a terrible squall of wind, which in truth did alarm me exceedingly, though I kept it under, that I behaved like an old soldier's daughter. Now this from him, who, you know, however prodigal he may be of them elsewhere, seldom bestows any of his compliments at home, was very high praise. But, to begin my journal regularly: —We were to em-

bark, you know, on the 10th of August. This we did. For the first four or five days I saw little worth recounting, being confined to my berth by sea-sickness. Of all sensations I have yet felt, this is the most overpoweringly miserable. My spirits and all my energies left me completely; and I lay in my berth with a feeling of apathy and indifference, which must be felt to be understood; but in less than a week all this left me. Oh, Harriet! what a new sight presented itself, when I at length went up upon deck. For the first time, I found myself out of sight of land. Nothing to be seen as far as the eye could reach, but the ocean, rolling its black waters all around us. Not as we have watched it together at Sidmouth, the waves following each other in long lines; but broken into so many distinct mountain-like masses. We were now out of soundings; a steady north wind drove us on, and in a fortnight's time we were in the latitude of the Madeiras. In another week we gradually neared the line, and got into the trade wind. The temperature was delightful; and, with a constant unvarying breeze right astern, our

beautiful vessel glided along through so gentle a swell, that the motion was hardly perceptible, though generally going from five to seven knots (miles) an hour. The ship did all but steer herself; and the sails not being altered, by day or night, one man alone of all the crew (the helmsman) was employed. The days grew oppressively warm as we proceeded; and, as our gallant captain said, "to save our complexions from the sun," he constructed an awning with his spare sails, which shaded us completely on the quarter-deck, and produced an agreeable current of air. You know I carried with me an ample supply of books; and during the heat of the day, I had a chair brought on deck, and read under the shelter of the awning. But, above all, I enjoyed the grandeur of the nights, and the magnificence of the sunset. All the sea around us to the horizon appearing, as the sun descended, one expanse of melted gold, and the sky a huge concave mirror, suspended over us, reflecting the same dazzling hue. For not only the west, as in Europe, but the whole vault of heaven appeared illumined with the glow, which with

you is confined to one quarter. This appearance on the sea commenced as the disk of the sun just appeared to rest its base on the surface of the water; was most brilliant when half set, and faded away as it sunk entirely. But long after sunset the heavens retained their glowing tints, which gave way to strong rays of light in the west, resembling what I have heard of the Aurora Borealis. The nights too, were most beautiful, the moon was nearly at the full, and the sky always cloudless.

"At this time I used to sit for hours at the stern, admiring the effect of the moon-beams on the sails, or watching the track which the vessel left behind it; at first, from the rapidity of her motion, appearing a line of fire, then spreading and losing itself in the distant waves.

"Who has compared this to the traveller's own recollections and regrets for the friends left behind? at first deep and strong, then mixed, though I am sure not lost, in the tide of other passions and events.

"When within a week's sail of Barbadoes, frequent flights of birds, all of which were strange to me, and many very beautiful, indi-

cated our approach to land. I at first took the flying fish for some of these; when in the air they exactly resemble the swallows that you see skimming the surface of a pond in England, and every now and then just touching it with their breasts. The motion of the fish is as rapid, and it is much the same in colour. Pursuing them we saw shoals of dolphins and bonitoes, and at night the flying fish would frequently attempt to clear our ship, but striking against the sails or yards, were caught by the sailors, who used them next morning as baits for the dolphins, many of which were thus caught. The poor things while dying on the deck, varied their colour to every tint of the rainbow. I really do not think Falconer's description exaggerated.

"We had no other passenger on board. Our hours were very regular. We rose at seven, breakfasted at eight, dined at three, drank tea at seven, and went to bed at ten or eleven. The captain was, I was told, an excellent navigator. He was particularly polite to mamma and me, and the cargo of sea-faring compliments which he lavished on us was sometimes

amusing, and, perhaps, sometimes troublesome. Papa got terribly sulky for want of something to do. Mamma spent most of her time in her berth, or working worsted, and I lived chiefly on deck.

"With what delight, after being four weeks at sea, we hailed the cry of 'Land! land!' and the beautiful green island of Barbadoes was seen emerging from the ocean. Its hills, rising in gentle ascents from the sea, were studded with the planters' houses. Every spot covered with canes, the vivid green of which resembled a corn-field in England in the month of June. Each summit was crowned with a windmill, stretching its sails to the sea breeze.

"After rounding the nearest point of land, the harbour of Carlisle Bay opened upon us, and we cast anchor opposite Bridge Town. Here the packet stopped to deliver a mail. Papa went on shore, but would not let mamma or me accompany him, saying that we should be more comfortable where we were than at the miserable West India hotels. The appearance of the town was not, indeed, very tempting. It looked ill-built, and the streets so

narrow, that it must be very hot. We feasted on delicious fruit, brought out by boat-loads from the harbour for sale. In twenty-four hours we set sail again for Curaçoa, where we had also to deliver a mail. Another week brought us thither, but we did not stop more than twelve hours in the harbour, and none of us went on shore. The town looked very mean. We now steered direct for Jamaica. The second day after we left Curaçoa we encountered what the captain called "a smart squall." *I* should rather term it a terrible storm. It came from the east, the horizon becoming very dark in that quarter before it commenced. All the sailors, on discovering this appearance, were called on deck, and some of the poor fellows were up on the tops of the masts, reefing the sails, when the storm (as I call it) came on. It was wonderful to see the skill and boldness with which they climbed. I trembled on looking up at the man who was reefing the main-top-sail (see what a sailor I am!) who, hanging at the extremity of the yard, his hands employed in gathering up the sail, which was flapping

violently with the wind, seemed to depend for support at this dizzy height on a single rope, on which one foot was placed as in a stirrup, while he had no resting-place for the other; and this when the ship was pitching and rolling so that I was forced to hold fast, with both hands, to the binnacle, to steady myself. As the squall came on, driving rain accompanied it, and going down to the cabin, I could see no more of the terrors which surrounded us, but only heard the wind whistling and howling in the shrouds, and the roaring of the waters through which it drove our ship at the rate of fifteen miles an hour; and the stamping of the sailors as they hurried to and fro over our heads. This did not last more than half an hour; and, as I have already told you, I got great praise for the heroism which I displayed, or rather seemed to display, for, at heart, I was a very coward.

"In two days more we arrived at Jamaica. We made the land early in the morning, nearly opposite to the Keys, or rocks off the harbour; and as papa was ill-natured enough not to call me, I knew nothing of it, and the ship was

actually at anchor, between Port Royal and Kingston, before I left my berth. How provoking! The island must have been fine from the sea.

"Papa went on shore immediately, to report his arrival to the commander of the forces on the island, and returned for us the same evening, after having taken these lodgings, as a temporary residence, till he can get a country-house (here called a penn), near Up Park Camp, where the troops who are more immediately under his command are stationed. I have not yet been out anywhere. The lower part of the town of Kingston appeared, as we drove through it from the wherry wharf, where we landed, to be a collection of large warehouses and miserable mean wood huts, jumbled together in narrow ill-built streets, with heaps of dirt and rubbish at all the corners. This, the upper part of the town, is something better; but here the houses are inferior, at least externally, to what I had expected. Of their interior, and of their inhabitants, I shall be better able to tell you in my next. Our lodging is a cool, comfortable house, kept by a

very obliging and very talkative mulatto woman. "Brown lady," I find she styles herself. I do not find the heat nearly so oppressive as I feared. We keep our windows open, and there is a draught through the room from the sea breeze. If we had a carpet instead of the polished slippery boards, our drawing-room would look much like an English one. At night I have felt really chilly; but then I sleep with all the windows wide open on a hard hair mattress, covered only by a single thin holland sheet. A mosquito net supplies the place of curtains, and if proper precautions are taken by your servant before you get into bed, or the net is let down, beating all around the roof and sides of the bed with a towel, you are secure from these tormenting insects. If this is not carefully done, the net, when let down, generally shuts in ten or twenty mosquitoes with you, and they are not pleasant companions. They easily bite through the thin sheet with which you are covered, and sleeping till they have all supped on you is out of the question; they rejoice over their victim with such an incessant shrill, whizzing noise.

"In the morning you see these wretches hanging on the sides of the net, so bloated and swelled with your blood as to be three times their former size, and their colour changed from white to black. You easily detect them, therefore, on the white net; and, as they cannot fly now, your vengeance is sure. And this is some satisfaction for the night's torment.

"Very few people have yet called on us, and these chiefly military; and, amongst them, his Excellency the commander of the forces, who seems universally liked here. Papa says that he is a very good soldier, and no martinet. Of this I can be no judge. I only know that he is still a very handsome man, and that he paid me so many compliments that I ought to be specially obliged to him. They say he is going to be married shortly.

"Now, my dear Harriet, in return for this respectably sized journal, send me another such, with all your Bath news; and believe me, as ever, my dear friend,

"Yours affectionately,

"EMILY VIVIAN.

"P. S.—I have not yet seen your brother. He is, I am told, at one of his estates on the other side of the island. We have not met, you know, since I left school. But I still consider him as an old friend. Besides, he is your brother, Harriet. Adieu!

"E. V."

Three weeks had now elapsed since Vernon's fever had left him; but he continued to feel its effects. On attempting to take the least exercise, a swimming in the head and giddiness succeeded; so that, if he attempted to walk without support, he was in danger of falling. His spirits were still wretchedly low, his appetite gone, and his whole frame unstrung. His medical friends advised him to try change of air; but he dreaded the journey to the south side of the island. While he was hesitating, he was agreeably surprised by receiving a letter forwarded to him by M'Kenzie, the direction in the handwriting of his school-fellow and old friend, Captain Byam, of the Royal Navy, whom he had left in Lon-

don soliciting employment. It was as follows: —

"His Majesty's Sloop Dauntless,
Port Royal.

"My dear Vernon,

"When we parted in London four months ago, I very little hoped to see you so soon again. But I have been appointed to the Dauntless sloop of war, and immediately ordered out to this station. I have just been to inquire after you at the address which you gave me, and am truly sorry to learn, my dear fellow, that you have had so severe a brush with that infernal yellow fever. Thank God, you beat it off at last.

"And now I have a plan for you. I am going on a short cruise to Porto Bello and the river Chagres, avowedly to convoy some small craft belonging to the merchants here, and protect them against the Yankees, or the South American insurgents; but in reality, to get on board there a freight of some hundred thousand dollars.

"Now, a sea voyage will be the very best thing to set you on your legs again; and I

need not say how delighted I shall be to have you with me. So get conveyed across the island as you best can; take a berth in my sloop (we have a clever surgeon on board); and I'll engage to land you again at Kingston in two months, in high health.

"My orders are, to sail in four days' time; so make haste.

"Ever yours sincerely,

"HENRY BYAM."

This was too promising an offer to be refused. His surgeon strongly advised him to accept it; and even poor Julia, though the tears filled her eyes, could not ask him to stay.

"Never mind two months, my dear Julia," said Vernon; "they will soon pass away."

"Yes, they will to you, I hope. You will have friends with you, and be entertained and happy; but I — I shall do nothing but think of you from morning till night, and fancy that you may be getting worse, or — or some horrible thing, every long day till you come back. But never mind, if it does you good."

The journey was accomplished by relays of Vernon's negroes bearing him on their shoulders, extended on a sort of palankeen; and he arrived, not very much fatigued, at M'Kenzie's house. Captain Byam met him there, said that he sailed next evening, and that they must go on board at Port Royal early in the morning.

Julia, who had accompanied Vernon, walking most of the way by the side of his litter, holding an umbrella over him, after taking a desponding leave, quitted him to go to Mount Edwards. She preferred it to Kingston, where her military acquaintance from camp might find her out, and scandalise her in the eyes of her coloured relations and friends, "for seeing company while her husband was away."

"I am not," she added, "afraid of your being jealous, for I trust you know me too well by this time, Charles, to doubt me for an instant."

Whether she was or was not correct in this supposition, Vernon was pleased with the arrangement. The next morning he went on

board the Dauntless, and in the evening was again at sea. The rapidity with which he recovered his spirits and strength, seemed to him almost miraculous. Though unable, when carried on board, to walk a hundred steps without assistance; after being six days at sea he could climb the mast head, and almost rivalled his friend Captain Byam's flow of spirits.

They had only one other guest at the Captain's table, one Don Martin Vilmas, a Spanish merchant, residing chiefly in Jamaica, of immense wealth, by whom most of the vessels they were convoying to Porto Bello were freighted, and to whom the principal part of the expected freight of specie was to belong. He was an intelligent man, spoke good English, and was exceedingly amusing in calm weather; but when the breeze was high, or there was the least swell, the poor Spaniard became terribly alarmed, and repenting much having ventured himself with an English captain, who would carry so much sail, shut himself up in his cabin, and was heard fervently entreating his patron saint, St. Martin, to forgive his

having embarked with heretics, but for his sake nevertheless to save the ship.

Having to beat both against the strong current of the Gulph stream, and also the trade wind, the convoy was a week reaching Porto Bello.

Vernon went on shore with Don Martin to see the town, which presented an assemblage of what were once magnificent mansions, now nearly all in ruins from earthquakes, time and neglect, intermingled with small wood huts, crowded together in narrow filthy streets. The once formidable fortifications which protected its superb harbour, were nearly in ruins. The old rusty dismounted honey-combed cannon which surmounted the walls, or lay at the opening embrasures, were totally unserviceable. The population of the town was chiefly a mixed breed, between the Spaniard, the negro and the Indian, varying in shade from the yellow Creoles to the olive Aboriginal. Poverty and indolence were apparent amidst this motley population; no work of any kind seemed going on; but the whole family of each hovel were lying or sitting on mats, or bullocks' hides,

placed on the shady side of the street, the men smoking cigars, and the women and children sleeping, or staring at the strangers. Pigs and a disgusting looking kind of hairless dogs were rolling about with the naked children in the dirt of the streets.

Captain Byam did not remain here more than twenty-four hours, and having got rid of his convoy, weighed anchor again, and made for the river Chagres, distant about two days' sail from Porto Bello. Don Martin Vilmas, whose interest here in consequence of his wealth, and, probably, also his bribes, was great, exerted it now to induce the jealous Spanish government to allow Captain Byam to accompany him across the isthmus to Panama; and Vernon, disguised as a sailor (for a British land officer had never yet been permitted to do this), accompanied the party.

They embarked in a large eight-oared barge, in which they were to be rowed up the Chagres as far as the foot of a chain of mountains, a branch of the Andes, which form a spiral ridge throughout the Isthmus of Darien. The Chagres is broad and deep, and navigable for a

considerable distance. They passed a small fort near the mouth of the river, and another (Fort Veula), about five miles further up, on the right bank. Neither seemed ever to have been strong; but now it appeared very questionable to our military travellers whether the old cannon on their rotten carriages could have been brought to bear on any boats attempting to force the passage. They certainly would not have been a serious impediment to a determined invader. A squadron of British men-of-war boats would row through them with derision. If such were the only obstacles which they had to oppose, the adventures of the English buccaneers, under Morgan of Jamaica, seemed no longer incredible. The stream was deep and strong, and the barge slowly made its way against the current, though the Spanish negroes who rowed it, stimulated by Don Martin's promised reward, exerted themselves to the utmost. A dark impenetrable forest covered each bank, the thick foliage of the mahogany and cedar trees shut out the sea breeze, and the heat was oppressive. Many alligators were sleeping on the sides of the river, and

though Captain Byam hit them with a rifle several times, their hides always turned off the ball.

Night succeeded before they reached the end of their voyage (Barbacoa), where they were to relinquish their barge. They anchored at the most sheltered spot they could find, and part of the party bivouacked on the shore, while the others preferred trying to sleep in the barge. Swarms of musquitoes rendered real sleeping out of the question. Vernon found his cigar box his greatest consolation, and after a comfortless night he was glad to find the barge under weigh again next morning by sunrise.

By noon they reached Barbacoa, where Don Martin had mules in waiting, ready saddled. Their road now lay over a high chain of mountains. The ascent was precipitous, the Spanish mountain paths not winding round a hill like the Anglo-Jamaica roads, but making straight up to the top of it. The country continued to be quite uncleared, and uninhabited, the sides of the mountains being covered with forests of cedar and mahogany. After toiling up this

steep ascent for four hours, our travellers got into the region of clouds, and for miles farther had to make their way through so thick a mist that the narrow road seemed doubly dangerous, and their thin linen clothing was wet through. On emerging from this they found themselves again in sunshine, and in about an hour more reached the summit of the pass. The clouds hung about half a mile below them, and the chain of mountains on which they were riding seemed an island in the midst of a vast ocean. Now and then an opening cloud afforded a glimpse of the world beneath, and for an instant or two Vernon beheld from the same spot the Atlantic and Pacific. The descent on the Panama side of the mountains was still more hazardous, and the bones of mules that lay whitening in the ravines below, and on the projecting ledges of the rocks, showed how frequently accidents had occurred to the caravans or travellers benighted, or involved in a more than usually thick mist.

The road improved as they approached Panama; and, about a mile from the town, they were met by the Spanish governor and staff,

who came out, mounted on mules, to receive the English naval captain. The governor was a mean, Jewish-looking old man, dressed in a blue uniform, heavily bedizened with lace, the stirrups, bits, and holster-pipes of his mule of solid silver; but his linen, face, and hands were not attractive, and Captain Byam did not relish the kiss with which he was honoured.

Panama was formerly a walled town, but few vestiges of any such fortification remained on the land side of the town. Two strong forts defended the harbour. As they passed through the great street, the Spanish troops on the main guard turned out to salute the governor. Vernon was amused by observing that they fell in, not according to height, but to dress. Those in the front rank possessed trowsers; those in the rear rank were nearly in a state of nudity. Yet these were royal troops.

The town of Panama wore a more busy appearance than Porto Bello, carrying on considerable trade with Peru. Captain Byam and Vernon spent four days very pleasantly with Don Martin at his villa near the town; and then, the merchant having finished his business,

returned to their ship in the river Chagres. A day or two more was taken up in getting on board Don Martin's chests of specie (chiefly in dollars), and the Dauntless put to sea again. Nothing occurred on their voyage back to Jamaica but the alarm occasioned one evening as the party were at dinner, by the ship being carried rather out of her course by the strength of the Gulph current, and passing over some quicksands with barely water enough to float her. In a heavy swell, she would probably have beaten herself to pieces. Poor Don Martin was horribly frightened, and tried to raise his spirits by helping himself to a full tumbler of champagne, the effect of which was spoilt, by Vernon's comforting remark, "Oh! dear Vilmas, how your dollars will chink when she strikes!"

"Oh! Santa Maria! Oh! St. Martino, ora pro nobis!" said poor Don Martin, dropping the untasted wine, and falling on his knees.

Two days afterwards, they arrived safely at Port Royal. Julia was awaiting Vernon at his lodgings, on his return to Kingston.

CHAPTER VII.

Vernon found on his table a card for a dinner at Mr. Otway's on the following day. The dinner hour being half-past six, it was dusk when he entered the drawing-room; but, on taking his seat next Margaret Otway, he was pleased with the clever conversation of an unknown lady who sat next her on the sofa. The tones of her voice were those of youth, and too animated to be that of a Creole. Indeed, in a few minutes, some allusions which she made to her voyage outwards discovered that she was newly arrived.

Vernon's curiosity was raised, and, when dinner was announced, he handed down the unknown lady; and, on entering the well-lighted dining-room, looked with great pleasure on his companion. She seemed about twenty, tall, but graceful, and with a complexion which could not have been long exposed to a Jamaica sun.

"Did I not hear you," he said, "say to Miss Otway upstairs that you are but lately arrived?"

"Yes. It is only now three weeks since I landed."

"You surely are not a native of Jamaica?"

"Oh no; I came out with my father upon his being placed on the staff of the island."

"Do not think me impertinent," interrupted Vernon, "if I ask you one question more. Were you not at school at Landsdown House, near Bath, five years ago?"

"Yes, I was," answered she, with a look of surprise, and fixing her eyes on Vernon, demanded, "Can it be Mr. Charles Vernon whom I have the pleasure of seeing?"

"Miss Vivian!" exclaimed Vernon. "I thought from the moment I first heard your voice upstairs, that it was familiar to me. How rejoiced I am to meet you again."

"And I am just as much gratified on again meeting my friend Harriet's brother. But how five years have altered you, Captain Vernon! I do not wonder that I did not at first recollect in the grenadier by my side the little

round-faced Marlow cadet whom I knew at Bath."

"And I," said Vernon, "must confess that my recollections did not prepare me for what I now see."

"And you hope," replied Emily, "that what you are saying will excuse your not recollecting me. If I had not something else to ask you about, I don't think I should forgive you so soon. Have you heard from your sister since you left England? And why have we not seen you before?"

"Yes, I have heard from Harriet; indeed, she partly prepared me for the pleasure I now enjoy. You would, of course, have seen me sooner if I had been well, and in Kingston; but I am only just returned from a cruise, which I took to recover from the effects of a fever, and I had not heard of General Vivian's arrival, or I should have paid my respects to him immediately. Is he of the present party?"

And Vernon was introduced to the general, a fine old military looking man, who sat opposite to him. Mrs. Vivian, who was at the other end, too far off for an introduction, was pointed

out to him; an elderly matron-like looking woman, with a quick eye, and rather a fidgetty manner.

"And you have been here three weeks," said Vernon; "long enough to form some opinion of the place. Has it answered your expectations?"

"I can hardly answer your question, I have as yet seen so little of the society: this family is the only one with which, as yet, we have made any intimacy. As to the heat, it is far less oppressive than I expected. But Margaret Otway tells me that the gaieties of the island are just beginning."

"The races, you mean. Will you be there?"

"Oh, not only races at Kingston, but I am told at Spanish Town also, and some balls — the Colts balls, I think they are called."

"Colts balls?"

"Yes — though I understand they are only attended by bipeds. Miss Otway tells me that they are given by the newly-elected members of the Jamaica parliament — House of Assembly, is it not called? These, for the first year, they call Colts."

"You will go to them, I suppose."

"I hope so; I want to see all the sights, and I think that we shall persuade papa to take us. He certainly goes himself, as he is obliged to be at Spanish Town to pay his respects to the governor."

"Are there any hopes that I might be admitted to your party?"

"Oh, I have no doubt mama will be glad of an escort, for we seldom can depend on papa."

It was therefore arranged that Vernon should become an attendant on the ladies during the gaieties of the ensuing week. He had seen enough of Emily Vivian to require very little pressing to come to a house where he was sure of meeting her. Even when he returned to his lodgings, his mind still dwelt upon her image.

"Ah, Charles," said Julia, as he almost unconsciously described his new acquaintance; "Ah, Mr. Vernon, I fear you are going to fall in love with this lady! and then what will become of poor me!"

"Oh, no!" answered Vernon, "how can

you think so? Do you not know, my dear Julia, that I love you too well for you to be in danger from a rival?"

"Still, take care: I know you love me now, but I am afraid that your affections are fickle. I shall always be afraid of your going to that lady's house."

"I am very sorry to hear you say so, Julia, for I am engaged to be there a great deal during next week. We make a party together to Spanish Town, to the balls there."

A smothered sigh was her only answer; and he tried, but in vain, to remove her uneasiness. Perhaps his own mind was not in the best state for this purpose. Though it may sometimes flatter, it is on the whole generally teazing to be the object of jealousy, especially where it is felt to be unfounded. Julia's beauty, her affectionate tenderness of disposition, her sweetness of temper, and above all, perhaps, her warm attachment to him, gave her a hold which he thought no other woman could have on his affections. It was impossible, he thought, that he could ever wish to give her a rival; and if he could,

every principle of gratitude must prevent his doing so.

Still he was sensible of much admiration of Miss Vivian, and a wish to see more of her; and both the admiration and the wish were irritated by Julia's imprudent expression of her fears. Absurd as he thought these fears were, still he saw that they would disturb the new source of pleasure which was opened to him, — a pleasure great anywhere, but inestimable in the mental famine of Jamaica.

After a short mutual silence they retired, with less agreeable feelings towards each other than they had felt since their first intimacy.

The Kingston races were held in December; they generally last two days. On the first, a king's purse of considerable value is run for; and on the second a subscription purse. The crowd which attends them is immense. The negroes are passionately fond of the sport, and bet high on their favorite horses, frequently hazarding at a single heat the whole amount of a year's hard-earned savings. Always noisy whenever their passions are excited, their discordant voices are heard, at their highest

pitch, from all quarters of the course, bawling out bets on their favorite racer.

"Two dollar to one on Rodney!" "Whiskey against de field for a pistole!" "Viper for ever for a doubloon!" echo on all sides. The very children seem infected with the mania, and one's ears are pierced by the shrill voices of the little black imps yelling out "One five-paunce on Parasol!" "A macaroni to ten-paunce on Whiskey against de field!"

On the first day of the races Vernon had called, according to his engagement, at General Vivian's. Miss Vivian took a seat in his open gig, whilst the General and his lady followed in a curricle.

The gay equipages of the Kingston gentry, consisting of gigs, curricles, barouches, and every sort of open carriage, were driving about the centre of the course amidst the negro crowd, whom they seemed every moment in danger of running over. The only equestrian spectators were the officers from Up Park Camp and Stony Hill. A numerous string of kittereens, filled by the women of colour, formed the outer bound of the course

in a stationary circle. The servants who drove the kittereens might be recognised as belonging to the merchants who were driving about in the centre of the course. The brown ladies were of course most splendidly arrayed for the occasion, and anxious by dress as well as by their personal personal charms to eclipse the buchra women.

A crowd in motion is always an animating scene. Here variety added to the effect. Every gradation of colour and rank, from the lordly white planter in his showy curricle, to the abject negro slave, were jumbled together in one moving mass.

The clear-toned bugles of the * * * regiment gave the signal for the horses to be prepared for starting, and it was amusing to observe how instantly the noise and vociferation amongst the negro crowd ceased; all eyes were turned in breathless anxiety towards the starting-post. A second blast from the bugles, and four horses started. They were ridden by negro jockeys, whose caps, silk jackets, and other finery were oddly contrasted with their bare legs. A negro cannot keep a firm seat with the

incumbrance of either boots or shoes. The horses at first kept pretty close together, but by the time they had run round half the course a grey got considerably ahead, and shouts of "Viper! Viper!" burst forth, and followed him to the winning-post.

The second heat soon followed, and with it a general scramble amongst the spectators to get as close as possible to the post.

Among the carriages thus rushing and crowding to one spot, the wheel of Vernon's gig got locked in that of another; both horses were restive, and backed and plunged with great violence, so that all Vernon's skill as a whip could not prevent the loss of a wheel, and the inevitable consequence of such a disaster, the upset of his gig. He and his companion were thrown to the ground with considerable violence; and as he sprung up he observed with great alarm that she lay stunned almost under the feet of the horse belonging to the other carriage, who, as he continued kicking and plunging, seemed every instant on the point of trampling on her.

Forcing his way between the neighbouring

gig and the wreck of his own, he sprang to her assistance, and, as he stooped to raise her, was struck down by a violent kick.

He instantly, however, rose again, and succeeded in removing her from her perilous situation, though in doing so he discovered that the blow which he had just received had dislocated his left shoulder. Luckily, Mrs. Otway's barouche was not far distant, and Miss Vivian, who began to recover from the first stun of her fall, managed to totter to it with his support. To his inquiries if she was much hurt, she answered,

"I hope not—the stun and fright at first overcame me, so that I could not move: and without your assistance I think I could not have escaped alive from under that furious horse's feet. But what a risk you ran in rescuing me!"

"Is not your left arm hurt," asked Mrs. Otway: "I observed that in lifting Miss Vivian into the barouche you appeared not to use it."

"No—nothing of any consequence," answered Vernon, "only put out, I fancy; and

as soon as I can see you safe at home, any surgeon will replace it in ten minutes."

"Good God!" said Emily, "and this you have suffered from assisting me!"

"Do you think, Miss Vivian, in such a service I could regret it?"

There was something in Vernon's voice and look as he said this, which crimsoned Miss Vivian's face, before pale with fear. At this moment for the first time Vernon cast his eyes on the next carriage, and met those of poor Julia. The kittareen which she was in was locked in by the crowd so close to him that he knew she must have seen and overheard all that passed. One glance from her dark eyes told at once what she felt. She pulled down her veil and threw herself back in the carriage; while her ill-suppressed sobs, as they reached Vernon's ear, gave him far greater uneasiness than his injured arm.

"Oh, Mr. Vernon," said Miss Vivian, as she watched his treacherous countenance, "I fear the pain of your arm is getting worse. You turn paler every moment; and the

crowd is still so great that it will be some time yet before the carriage will be able to move and take us home, and you ought to see a surgeon immediately." Glad to have his emotion laid to any but the real source, he answered that the heat and exertion rather overcame him. The crowd, however, was beginning to disperse, and Mrs. Otway's carriage, as soon as the way was clear, drove off the course, and shortly landed the party at her house. A surgeon, whom a footman had been previously sent to call, was in attendance, and Vernon's arm was soon replaced in its socket. He was advised, however, to return immediately to his lodgings, as he already showed symptoms of fever, from pain, heat, and excitement.

During his confinement of two or three days, he was again nursed by Julia. But her former gaiety was gone, and he in vain endeavoured to assure her that his love for her was undiminished, and that it ever would remain so while hers for him continued.

The scene on the race-course was always

present to her mind, and in reply to his protestations she silently cast her mild eyes on him, in whom all her happiness, and every affection of her heart and soul, were concentrated, and then turned away to hide the tears which filled them.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Ha! Mr. Vernon," said General Vivian, the first day Vernon was sufficiently recovered to come out, "I am rejoiced to see you here again. Off the sick-list, I hope. Indeed, I want to put you on duty. I am going to Spanish Town to-morrow, to dine with the governor. Now, my ladies have set their hearts on going to the Colts ball there, to-morrow evening. My aide-de-camp must accompany me; so they are sadly in want of an escort. Will you do me the favour of taking care of them? that is, if, as I suppose, you intend going yourself to these balls."

Vernon accepted the offer readily enough, and it was accordingly arranged that he should take an early dinner with Mrs. Vivian the next day, and accompany the ladies, in the cool of the evening, to Spanish Town in the general's barouche.

Poor Julia's fears had made Vernon resolve, while on his way from his lodgings to the general's, to avoid any intimacy with Emily Vivian. He felt himself tied to Julia by the promises made to her at their first acquaintance, by gratitude for his life preserved by her care, and the return which he felt due to her affection; yet he could not avoid a consciousness, painful and yet pleasing, that he might become attached to Emily. When in company with Julia, her love and the recollection of his obligations made him feel it impossible for him ever to quit her; and, perhaps, he mistook for the moment those feelings, and the indescribable sensation of self-complacency produced by the presence of a woman whose affections you know to be devoted to you, for a stronger passion.

But when in the society of her more educated rival, he felt a respect, an admiration for her talents and principles, which made him prize, as a favour from a superior being, the slightest approbation of his attentions, or the most trifling approach to familiarity. And his growing passion, though restrained from

showing itself, almost as much by the reverence with which it was mixed, as by the strong ties which bound him to Julia, like a confined fire, burned only more fiercely.

To be allowed to give her his arm when walking, to engross her conversation in a tête-à-tête, even to sit next her at table, were felt almost as great favours as any which he had received from Julia, who had at once abandoned herself to his love.

The feelings produced by the one were all pleasing, while those which associated themselves with the other were too often debased by a recollection of the disgrace which in his native country would attach itself to such a connexion.

The quick maternal eyes of Mrs. Vivian soon detected, and with no small satisfaction, the conquest which her daughter seemed to have made. Emily herself could not but perceive his marked attentions, the interest with which he listened and spoke to her, and his eagerness to attach himself to her on all occasions, and her affections, previously disengaged, predisposed as they were by her

friendship for his sister, soon took a strong bias in his favour.

In many respects, they seemed formed for each other: both possessing vivid imaginations and warm feelings, and great frankness in expressing them. But though frankness was a strong characteristic of both, it arose, perhaps, from different sources. In him, it was the result of high spirits, and the freedom of an education in camps. The thoughtlessness with which military men usually allow themselves to be tossed about the world, little able to govern their fortunes or their situations, and forced to leave to chance, not only the great events, but even the ordinary incidents of their lives, makes it scarcely worth their while to acquire, or even to practise the reserve and watchfulness by which men in other professions try to elude the obstacles in their way. Experience had never taught Vernon to be afraid of committing himself by expressing his opinions to his equals. In his profession, if he only kept on good terms with his commanding officer, no enemy could hurt him.

The frankness of Miss Vivian's manner was more the effect of reflection. Few girls at her age had seen more of the world. Her father's staff situations and hospitable disposition had thrown her into a great deal of company, and her beauty and talents forced her always to take an active part in it. The effect of improvement is generally simplification. Her practice in the arts of society soon taught her how rarely it is necessary to conceal feelings, and how still more rarely to affect them. Conscious, though not, perhaps, to their full extent, of her beauty and talents (for who that possesses either is not so?), feeling no doubt of the real propriety of her sentiments, and accustomed to have them received not only with approbation, but with applause, she uttered them with the rapidity, the truth, and the colouring with which they were formed.

Among the greatest charms of her manner as well as of her countenance, was their transparency — the beautiful mind that shone through them. The effect on Vernon was not more delightful than it was new. He had

been accustomed always in talking to girls to take what they said with allowance, sometimes to add, and sometimes to diminish from the sense which the words seemed to convey; to understand them as sometimes meaning a great deal more than was said, sometimes a great deal less, sometimes just the contrary, and generally nothing at all.

In Emily's conversation he had an intellect and a heart of high order laid open before him. Had they been of an ordinary description, such frankness, by giving to them, instead of the languid feebleness of copies from copies, the raciness and animation of originals, would have been very dangerous to a man capable of appreciating it; but in Emily Vivian it was irresistible.

The drive to Spanish Town presents very little variety of scenery. The same stupendous mass of mountains, piled one over the other, from the tops of the Liguanea hills to the heights of the cloudcapped Blue Mountains, form the principal object, and shut in on the right the semicircular plain of Liguanea, through the centre of which their road lay as

across an amphitheatre, and on the left the view was bounded by the sea.

Six miles from Kingston, the Rio Cobre (Spanish for copper river) spreads itself over a large morass. The place is called the Ferry, from the original mode of crossing it. Now, however, a road raised on wooden piles for the space of two miles runs across. The low stagnant water on each side, even in the middle of the day, when the West India sun has drawn up the greater part of the fog which at all other times hangs over it, emits a sickening smell; and till an hour after sunrise few Europeans can pass it without immediately suffering a violent headache. The total circumference of this swamp (or bog, as it is termed in Jamaica) is about eight miles. Low bushes, reeds, and a sort of aquatic grass overspread the whole with a rank luxuriance, and their decayed leaves and stems falling into the stagnant water, and fermenting there under a tropical sun, are the principal causes of the peculiar sickening vapour which the whole morass emits. The air all round is consequently pregnant with fever. Luckily for

Kingston, the swamp is to the westward of the town, and as the trade-wind always blows from the east, its vapours never reach so far by day. But at night, when the sea-breeze has ceased, a west wind sometimes, though rarely, succeeds, and when it does, the yellow demon of fever, arising from his bed in the centre of the swamp, always accompanies it, and his walk through the city is that of the destroying angel in Egypt.

After crossing the bog, the road to St. Jago de la Vega, or Spanish Town, as the creoles in their indolence, to avoid having to articulate so long a name, have called it, lies through a rich flat country, cleared and cultivated, and studded with groves of cocoa-nut trees. Two immense cotton trees, growing close to the road-side, particularly rouse a stranger's admiration: they are perhaps the largest of their giant race in Jamaica, and tradition says that these identical trees were remarked by Columbus when he first saw the island. If so, the cotton tree seems to be as long-lived as the oak.

Spanish Town is fifteen miles from Kingston; the road just as you enter the city crosses the

Rio Cobre a second time by a handsome iron bridge. Here the stream deserves the name of a river, as it rushes with great velocity between two high banks.

"And can this be St. Jago de la Vega, the capital of the island," said Vernon, as they entered the town. Indeed, the old tottering houses, empty streets overgrown with grass, and the usual stillness which pervade the place, give you the idea of a city which has lately been the scene of some great calamity. An earthquake seems to have produced ruin amongst the buildings, and a famine to have thinned the inhabitants. Or you might fancy it the city in the Arabian nights, the inhabitants of which had been turned to stone. The real causes of its forlorn appearance were much more gradual in their operation.

The inland situation and want of communication with the sea, while they disqualify it for trade, pointed it out to the Spaniards and to the English as the place in which the public records might be deposited, and government carried on with the least danger of interruption from a predatory invader.

When the owners of the larger estates throughout the island resided on them, instead of living in England, many of them were members of the House of Assembly or of the council, and each had his house in Spanish Town during the session; and the other gentry, as in England, thought it fashionable to be in their capital during the sitting of their parliament, when balls, races, dinners, &c., were constantly given. At the period of this narrative, the proprietors were absentees; and of their representatives, the attornies and overseers, few attended but those having law business to transact, or who were actual members of the House. They too lived in lodgings.

The stately mansions which were built more than a hundred years ago by the then resident landed proprietors, were many shut up untenanted; or had fallen to ruin, partly from want of repair and partly from successive hurricanes and earthquakes; or were occupied by women of colour, whose mercantile or planter protectors were dead or in England, and who now earned a profit in their widowhood by letting them as furnished lodgings.

Most of these brown ladies had daughters whom they wished to settle, according to the custom of the country, and who in the end were generally taken away by some temporary lodger to fill the same situations which their mothers had filled before them.

To one of these lodging-houses the party proceeded. They immediately retired to dress for the Colts ball, which is always held at the King's-house (the governor's residence), in a very spacious saloon, reserved for such purposes, on the ground-floor. As they did not enter the room till ten (an hour later than the usual time), it was full, and presented a singular sight. The floor contained about three hundred people, part of whom were dancing to the music of a band stationed in a gallery above, which runs round three sides of the room. On forms placed all around were seated the mothers and unengaged daughters; while those among the men whom age, laziness, fear of the climate, or distaste deterred from dancing, were walking up and down in a sort of recess or alley formed beneath the gallery by its supporting pillars.

But the strangest sight to a European was the gallery above, filled with coloured women, glittering in their splendidly ornamented evening dresses. Though running round three sides of a very long room, and containing two or three rows of seats, it was full; not less than two hundred of these damsels of various shades sat at their ease, as in the boxes of a playhouse, and criticised their fair rivals, who seemed dancing beneath for their amusement. Serjeants of the * * * regiment, who furnished the governor's guard, were placed at the outer staircase leading to this gallery, with orders to admit none but women; no man of any colour (the musicians excepted) being allowed to enter.

Vernon danced with Emily Vivian, and afterwards promenaded the room with her; the band of the * * * regiment playing during the intervals of the dances. Their tête-à-tête was broke in upon by his friend Captain O'Halloran, who made some amends by pointing out to them the principal characters in the room.

"Observe," said he, "that little vulgar looking pock-marked man. He has more

influence in the Jamaica council and House of Assembly than any one, not excepting the governor himself. They say that he was banished from Scotland about thirty years ago, for some considerable offence, and came out here first of all in the capacity of a servant; he was next a book-keeper, then an overseer. But his principal success was as a negro-dealer — something resembling (though, while the slave-trade lasted, it was a much more lucrative business) a horse-dealer in England. Progressively, he has risen to his present situation of a very large proprietor, attorney to nearly half the absentees throughout the island, and member of the honourable House of Assembly. His income for some years past has amounted, they say, to 30,000*l.* a year, of which he does not appear to spend the twentieth part. The whole will, at his death, I believe, descend to a large brood of particoloured children. Though no great orator in the House, he is so successful in canvassing and bringing over to his opinion the members while out of it, that whatever he proposes there is sure to be carried. Do you observe those two elderly men walking together?"

"Is one of them a little like the man on the ass in Slakenburgius's tale?" asked Vernon.

"Yes. They are namesakes, and both in the honourable council of Jamaica, and by way of distinction, one commonly goes by the name of Nosey Macdonald; while the other, who is the longest talker in their whole house of lords or commons, is designated Mouth Macdonald, to distinguish them from a third member of the council (the old gentleman leaning on his gold-headed cane at the other end of the room), who is denominated Turtle-backed Macdonald. The latter, who is an excellent old gentleman, is our near neighbour at camp, and is very well known to our poor soldiers' wives and children by his charity. He has been forty years in the island, and makes no secret, when talking to us in his constant evening walk to see the picquet mount, that he came out to Jamaica as a journeyman barber. He is now very rich, and by far the most respectable of the three, though one of the others is of a good creole family."

"Pray, sir," asked Emily, "who is that

very tall princely-looking man who has just entered the room ? "

" He has the finest figure, notwithstanding his great height, and one of the most commanding countenances," added Vernon, " I ever saw."

" That is his grace the governor," replied O'Halloran. " He does, indeed, show blood as much as any man I ever saw. I wonder at seeing him in the room, as he does not often indulge himself in ladies' society."

A signal from her mother here withdrew Emily from the party, and O'Halloran continued — " Do look at that spruce little man, who looks as if he had just stept out of a bandbox, and who is addressing himself to the governor. He was appointed an aide-de-camp to some military governor, whose name I have forgotten, thirty years ago, retired on half-pay, and has since lived with thirteen governors in succession, and is now in his seventy-fifth year, though he does not look fifty. I think that he has some collectorship now. However, he has always been about each governor's establishment in succession ; and has contrived, though

holding no acknowledged office, to make himself useful to all the thirteen. Ah! there is the other constant member of his grace's household. Do you observe that very fat round man, leaning against a pillar?"

"With a face that might sit for a satyr?"

"Exactly. He is private secretary, and is of great use to the governor, who, you know, has to sit as chancellor. Now Thompson, the man whom I have just shown to you, was educated for the law, and besides his professional knowledge, being a man of great talents of almost every kind, and possessing an intimate acquaintance with the character and private affairs of almost every proprietor and merchant in the island, he supplies the chancellor with legal and circumstantial information, and often, it is said, guides his decision. His integrity is, I believe, unimpeached. He resides in the government house, and takes the head of the governor's table, at which he is generally the most entertaining guest. Though to be sure you know that your turn will come, if you have in you any materials which may afford him the amusement of dissecting you.

His powers of conversation are without exception the strongest I ever met with, and they have the advantage of being very little restrained by the motives and rules which keep most men in order."

General Vivian, who had been dining with the governor, now made his appearance, and shortly after joined Vernon, to introduce him to the admiral of the station, a fine, frank, old sailor, descended from a noble family well known on the Scottish border. Vernon was afterwards presented to the governor and to the commander of the forces. The former returned his salute, Vernon thought, rather too much "en gouverneur:" the latter delighted him by his frankness and intelligence. Vernon was sorry to hear from O'Halloran that he would be soon removed by the intended reductions, which would be much regretted not only by all the troops, but by the inhabitants of the island. The troops would lose, what is rarely to be met with, an excellent commander; the inhabitants, the security inspired by his talents and character.

Vernon now rejoined the ladies of his party,

and Emily, too tired to dance any more, accepted the offer of his arm to walk round the room again, and look on.

He was pleased to find that he was engaging the attention of the most distinguished woman present, for such she confessedly was. After glancing his eyes round, they returned to her with increasing homage: but this superiority was not produced simply by finer features or a finer figure than those of any female present. If not amongst the fair damsels beneath, perhaps from the dark-eyed beauties above, as striking could have been selected. Her charms were animation, intelligence, and refinement. In these qualities she had no competitor in the existing state of Jamaica society, and they were sufficient to hurry him, with no more power of resistance than a canoe within the rapids of Niagara, towards the passion which he had sworn to himself and to Julia to resist.

"Do I not lean too heavy on this arm which has so lately suffered in my service?" asked she, looking up in Vernon's face with a grateful smile.

"No indeed," replied he, pressing the fair arm which rested on his closer to his side; "what I enjoy now would repay any suffering, —that was a trifling accident."

Emily now coloured, and gently attempted to draw back her hand from its resting-place; but Vernon detained it, and added, in an emphatic whisper, "Oh, Miss Vivian, don't take it away." Emily coloured still deeper, and looked very confused; stronger expressions rose to Vernon's lips; when suddenly the recollection of his ties to Julia crossed and distracted his mind, and looking even more confused than she had done, he stammered forth "I— I— I— beg pardon, Miss Vivian." A silence, very distressing to both parties, ensued; Emily's embarrassment being only surpassed by her astonishment. And he, stung with the recollections of his own resolutions and promises, feeling that he was acting falsely and ungratefully to one, and absurdly to another, —that the instant which had passed might have ruined his happiness, and that the next might destroy his honour, — that he could not speak, and could not be silent, — felt a whirl and dizziness of mind

which no one who has not trod among these moral precipices can conceive.

Mrs. Vivian's eyes had constantly followed her daughter, and though she could not hear their conversation, had watched with satisfaction the looks of Vernon, and augured well from the blushes with which they were returned. Now, however, thinking it might be well to relieve their embarrassment, she rose from her seat, observing, "Emily, my dear, you walk too much; the exercise and heat of the room will overfatigue you; sit down with me, and Mr. Vernon will have the goodness to bring us an ice. As you have not been dancing lately, I think you may venture on one."

As soon as Vernon was thus despatched, she hazarded in vain a few hints and inquiries, by which she hoped to learn what had passed, and only obtained a request to go home, "as the heat was intolerable." On his return, Vernon was again, therefore, despatched to tell the general that they were going. During their short walk, for their lodging was close by, Mrs. Vivian proposed to Vernon that they

should form a party the next day, to visit the romantic pass leading from Spanish Town to the parish of St. Thomas in the Vale, which the unpoetical creoles have named "the Bog-walk." General Vivian seconded the proposed drive; and Vernon, though he dreaded another tête-à-tête with Emily, found no excuse to decline joining it; perhaps he did not search for one very eagerly.

The next morning, as Vernon was dressing for his engagement, Cæsar, whom he had left at Kingston with Julia, suddenly rushed into the room, saying, "Oh massa, missis very sick, fraid him die; beg massa come back directly for see him once more."

"Sick! die! how! what is the matter with her?"

"Oh, him really sick, massa, very sick; and if massa no come, him fret till him die."

"I don't know whether I can come to-day, Cæsar," said Vernon, the difficulties of an excuse for his engagement to the Bog-walk occurring to him. "Cæsar, go back directly and tell her that unavoidable circumstances will

detain me here till to-morrow, but that then I will certainly return."

"Massa no do so! When massa sick at Cane Garden, Miss Julia no good to him? And if massa no come, massa kill her!"

Vernon was shocked and frightened. At all events, he felt that with Julia's excited feelings and awakened jealousy, if already ill, his not complying with her summons would bitterly distress her, and this he could not bear to do.

On the other hand, the more he thought about it, the more difficult it seemed to find a plausible excuse for breaking his engagement to the Vivians. To make one somehow or other he was, however, determined, and ordering Cæsar not to take the horse out of the gig, but remain ready for starting again, he bent his way towards General Vivian's lodgings, and found himself in front of them before he had invented anything like an apology.

"So there you are, at last, Mr. Vernon," said the general, who was standing with his hat on at the door. "Why we have been waiting this half-hour. The horses have been

fretting in their traces, and I fancy that you will find the ladies above with their bonnets on, and nearly as impatient. Halloa there! bring the carriage round. I hear them on the staircase. Now hand the ladies in. Why, what the devil ails the man! You stand there like a recruit in the ranks, who does not comprehend the word of command."

"Why, general, I—I—I—am sorry—I am very sorry to say that—that I have just received a message from—my attorney Mr. M'Kenzie, requiring me to meet him on particular business this morning."

"Pho! there is no packet sailing, and what urgent business can you have, or he for you? Nothing, take my word for it, but what you can put off till to-morrow. Some accounts for you to look at, I suppose; or, perhaps, some of your sugar or coffee to be sold."

"So you want to leave us," interrupted Mrs. Vivian (looking at her daughter, and then at him), "to go and sell your nasty sugar."

"I do not know what it is about," stam-

mered Vernon. "Mr. M'Kenzie sent me word only that he wanted to see me immediately."

"And so," said the general, "to go about you don't know what or why, but you suppose some very urgent *business*, you spoil last night's scheme."

"Shall we lay our orders on him, Emily," said Mrs. Vivian.

"Oh dear, no. Not if he has any business of importance in Kingston. And I am sure he will not think of running away if that is not the case."

From the moment Emily had joined the group, his resolution had been gradually weakening, and finding the flimsy excuse which he had attempted so soon beaten down, he was unable now to urge a second, even if he could invent one. "And after all," he thought, "I can return to Kingston this evening; it will only make a few hours' difference." The carriage drove round in front of the open door at which they were standing; the general put Mrs. Vivian into the barouche, and followed himself, and (interpreting Ver-

non's silence for acquiescence) desired him to do the same for his daughter; and Vernon, overcome with perplexity, and hardly knowing what he was about, handed Emily up the steps and seated himself by her side. The party were out of Spanish Town and on the road to the Bog-walk before he could arrange his ideas. And then his anxiety for Julia, and the consciousness of the pain which his ill-conduct must give her, so occupied his mind, that even in her rival's company he was absent, silent, and miserable.

Obliged to endeavour to conceal his emotions, and fancying that he was watched, he felt very much relieved when, after a turn to the right, they arrived at the bank of the Rio Cobre, and the attention of the party was taken off by the scenery. They were now in the narrow defile through which the deep and clear Rio Cobre rushes on its way from its sources in the central mountains of the island to Spanish Town, and thence, after spreading over the morass at the Ferry, to the sea.

Tradition says that the Rio Cobre formerly

spread into a large lake (the appearance of which can yet be traced), in the low valley in the parish of St. Thomas in the Vale, and then emptied itself into the sea by a different channel; but that, an earthquake stopping up its former vent, it burst its way through the present channel.

After crossing a wooden bridge just broad enough to admit them, the party followed the narrow road which runs along the right side, quite close to the bank of the river.

The correspondence of the vast white cliffs on each side is so complete, that you perceive that, if closed together, they would fit in exactly; and like the Cheddar rocks in Somersetshire, must have been once united. The whole pass seems formed by the mountain having split apart in the centre, and the Rio Cobre directing its channel through the opening: its rapid waters, undermining and excavating the cliffs on each side, completed the breach. By the time our party had arrived thus far, it was near mid-day, but such was the height of the perpendicular rock on the right, under which the road ran, that even at

noon it afforded shade, and thus, protected from the sun, and fanned by the sea-breeze, every one but poor Vernon seemed delighted with the excursion.

The cliffs on both sides of the pass were covered with trees, shrubs, and plants, flourishing with southern luxuriance, though rooted in the rock. The lofty cabbage tree, shooting up from a prominent point above their heads, towered over its companions, like the mast of a first-rate man-of-war in the centre of her convoy. The sides of the carriage, as they drove on, brushed off the scented blossoms of the citron, lime, and orange trees which bordered the road. The shadow from the right cliff did not extend to the river, and its blue transparent waters dazzled the eyes as they rushed past. Each small whirlpool, as it spun down the centre current, shone like a ball of fire, till lost in the white foam of the successive falls, over which the river tumbles and dashes throughout the pass. The roar of the water rushing down its precipitous bed, and boiling in the basins it formed beneath its falls, the sea-breeze sighing in the woods above their

heads, and the refreshing shade in which they found themselves, brought on the delightful tranquil languor which, if long indulged in, ends in sleepiness. Even the agitation of Vernon's nerves gradually relaxed, and gave him up to the influence of the company in which, however unwillingly, he found himself.

After following its course for about seven miles, a fine fall of the Rio Cobre, as it rushes from a barrier mountain (on the other side of which lies the parish of St. Thomas's), terminates the pass. The road here divides itself. The left branch, which leads to St. Thomas's, ascends the hill by a zig-zag narrow pass cut out of the rock: the right, which leads from Spanish Town to the northern side of the island, winds up the steep side of the gigantic Mount Diablo.

The party were now on their return. When the carriage stopped, Vernon almost regretted that the general did not press him to remain (although he was resolved not again to yield), but observed, —

" Well, Mr. Vernon, I will now detain you

no longer from your business with Mr. M'Kenzie. Good morning. Let us see you on our return to Kingston, if you remain in town."

Poor Julia, in the meanwhile, had been seriously ill. The effects of a severe cold, caught while nursing Vernon when his arm was dislocated, had brought on a fever, and her jealous feelings, tortured by knowing in whose company he was at Spanish Town, gave her disorder a low nervous turn, which, in her present state (for she was likely to be a mother), her surgeon thought dangerous. This he told her without much ceremony, and Cæsar was then despatched, as has been already told, to summon Vernon. Cæsar, who had followed Vernon, and watched him into the general's barouche, and learned from the servants where the party were going, thought it best to adhere to his master's first directions, and return to Kingston and tell his mistress that his master would not come back till next day. The poor fellow was much attached to Julia, and perhaps gave more force to his news, by the pain he showed in communicating it.

"Miss Julia, me hope you no fret, but massa no able for come back to-day; him say him come to-morrow."

"No able, Cæsar!—why—what can keep him? Did you tell him how sick I am?—Oh, good God, that he can use me so!—He is with his buckra lady, I suppose,—with Miss Vivian!"

Cæsar was silent, and felt unable to defend his master; but Clara, who had just entered the room with some medicine, tried her powers of consolation.

"Miss Julia no fret so! You no know what keep massa; massa love you too much, and him too good to use you bad. Him come for see you to-morrow."

"To-morrow!—He'll come to-morrow!—Would I wait till to-morrow if I heard he was ill?—To-morrow! Oh, I cannot bear this!—And this for the sake of another! And I am fool enough to lie here fretting for his sake.—But I won't do so any longer."

And after venting her feelings in this soliloquy, the anger of irritated jealousy inspiring her with false strength, she rose and dressed

herself, and began to walk up and down the hall of the house.

Vernon, immediately after leaving his party, had hurried off to Kingston; but his imagination being full of Miss Vivian, he felt more and more angry with himself at having placed an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any approaches to a nearer connection with her, and began to wish almost that he had never seen Julia. Besides his reluctance to part from Emily, and the fatigue of his morning drive, he felt quite exhausted by the exposure to the sun in a hired open gig on his return to Kingston, and tormented besides by swarms of musquitoes, and with driving a sulky, stumbling, lazy horse. So that he reached home in no very good humour.

The first object that he encountered as he entered his lodgings, was Julia promenading the hall as we have just left her.

"Here he is! I knew you would come," said she, springing forward on seeing him, and expecting the usual kiss with which they always had met after an absence. Vernon pettishly answered, —

"Why what a fool I have been! Here, I have half-killed myself and my horse with heat and fatigue in hurrying home, and I find you walking about quite well. How could you send me such a message?"

Julia, who had hung back during this angry speech, but had still held the hand which had repulsed her, now dropped it, faintly sobbing out "Oh, Captain Vernon!" and fell backwards on the floor at his feet.

"Hi, massa!" said Clara, as she ran to lift her mistress from the floor, where she lay in an hysterical fit, and carry her to her bed, "Hi, massa! you no fraid for kill poor missis?"

"Good God! what have I done?" said he, as he followed to the bed-side to watch with terror and remorse her slow recovery. Julia's first effort on recovering her senses was to hold out her hand to him, and the moment she could, faintly to articulate,

"Don't distress yourself! I am better — I am well, Charles." But the exertion was followed by a second fit, and then a return of fever followed.

Vernon passed a night of misery and remorse. The next day, her fever abating, the surgeon recommended her being removed to Port Royal for change of air; which was accordingly done. He remained with Julia at Port Royal for five or six days, devoting his whole time and attention to her; and his kindness and affectionate manner, if it could not restore her former confidence in him, tranquillised her mind for the time, and with its serenity, her health also returned.

He left her at Port Royal, nearly recovered, to revisit Mount Edwards, where, on the whole, he was satisfied with the working of his new system. Every thing, indeed, did not succeed quite so well or so quickly as he had expected. He was sometimes angry with his overseer for not fully comprehending or enforcing his new code; sometimes displeased and mortified at finding that the negroes could not, or would not, always understand that they were benefited by it; but complained of the hardship of a more lenient, because a new discipline, as if they had forgotten the severity of that for which it was substituted. Still work went on;

and coffee was grown at a cheaper price than by blood: the report of the whip had ceased throughout his domain, his hospital was nearly untenanted, and the majority of the slaves looked well and happy.

CHAPTER IX.

After a week at Mount Edwards, Vernon returned to Kingston. He found that the plague of the West Indies, the yellow fever, had paid its introductory visit to General Vivian's family. Mrs. Vivian was seriously indisposed, and Emily had suffered a slight attack. He found her, pale and languid, on a sofa. All her European bloom had faded, and her dark blue eye, though still expressive, had lost its animation. To him, however, she appeared perhaps more interesting than when, glowing with health and spirits, she had been the ornament of the Spanish Town ball.

"And is it so that I find you, Miss Vivian?" said he, as he approached the sofa, and took her hand: "oh, this unmerciful fever! How it has altered you!"

"Oh, Mr. Vernon, this is nothing. But poor mamma. She is indeed ill—very ill; and I am unable to attend her. I have just left her room by desire of that positive man

Dr. M'Nalty, who will not allow me to go near her."

"Nothing dangerous I trust?"

"No—I hope not, as the fever has left her; but it was very severe the night it lasted, and it has left her very languid. I had not the fever nearly so long, and yet you see how lazy it has made me."

"Nay, do not call it by that name."

"Well, then. But this overpowering languor. How will it be possible to get rid of it? But here comes my father."

"Captain Vernon," said the general, "I am glad to see you again. But this house is now little better than a hospital. They have all got the fever, you see."

"I am truly grieved, sir, to witness the mischief my old acquaintance has been doing amongst you. But a plan has just suggested itself to me. You who are acquainted with the country, know that nothing would be so beneficial to your convalescents as change of air, especially to the cool temperature of the mountains. Now make me happy by coming up to Mount Edwards; I have plenty of room

for you all. You will not, I hope, need pressing to assure you how delighted I shall be to have you there."

"But we should be so large a party?"

"I have quite room enough for you. Do not hesitate on that ground."

"Well, I will consult Dr. M'Nalty, and if he recommends the thing, we may perhaps billet ourselves on you till these women recover themselves."

Shortly after Vernon had the satisfaction of seeing an expression of undisguised pleasure brighten the languid countenance of Miss Vivian, when M'Nalty declared that nothing would be so conducive to his patients' recovery as a removal to pure mountain air.

Miss Vivian to Miss Vernon.

Blue Mountains; 4,000 feet above the level of the sea: thermometer, 68°.
20th Nov. 1813.

"Yes, my dearest Harriet, I have the satisfaction of dating from these aereal regions; I pity the poor gods of old for having chosen their abode on Mount Olympus. America was not then discovered, or they must have

fixed their heaven here. Seriously, I feel unable to describe to you the delights of this paradise. Such a different climate from that furnace Kingston! And surrounded with such magnificent, I was going to say, such stupendous scenery! Such rides and walks! They say perfect happiness is not the lot of human nature, but had I *you* here, Harriet, I think I could not find anything else to wish for. But where is this paradise of yours? and how came you there, you will say? To relate every thing in order, I begin by telling you that my dear mama and myself were both attacked by what they call the seasoning fever, and that poor mama suffered severely. The fever left us in a state of weakness and lassitude, which till felt cannot be conceived, and while we continued at Kingston it seemed likely to be permanent. But your brother pressed my father in so friendly a manner to bring us hither, that is to say, to his estate at Mount Edwards, and he was seconded by our physician Dr. M'Nalty so strongly, that papa consented, and here we were carried (for mama and myself were too

weak to ride) a week ago, since which time I have had the satisfaction of seeing her recover almost visibly every hour: her spirits have quite returned, and her good looks nearly so. As for myself, I can only compare the effect which the mountain air has had on me to that of a shower of rain on my flower-garden at Summerhill, when withering from a long continuance of dry weather. Though obliged to make nearly half of our journey on a litter, I can now enjoy every morning and evening a ride on my pet little Spanish pony, a present from your brother, and called by him Busaco; or a ramble in the garden below the window opposite to which I am sitting.

"My father says that the temperature resembles that of the south of France. Nowhere, perhaps, could the productions of every country be so assembled. I see growing side by side, in the utmost luxuriance, the mango, cinnamon, and nutmeg trees of the East; the peach, nectarine, apple and pear trees of dear England; and the orange, lemon, cocoa nut, guava, shaddock, and all the other fruits of this

western world. We have, too, strawberries and currants, and peas and beans, and every European vegetable, together with the yam and plantain. All flourish together in the unvarying temperature of this climate, which is never too warm for European plants, nor too cold for those of the tropics.

"Our mansion is a fine large roomy one, and as to our host, Harriet, I need not describe him to you. By the bye, I do not know how to answer certain hints in your two last letters. But if you were serious, indeed you are mistaken. On one other point too, I must differ from you. You tell me of the frankness of a certain young soldier's manner (open heartedness I believe was your expression); now, Harriet, to me he has appeared the reverse. There is occasionally a mysteriousness about him, together with a frequent depression of spirits, which I cannot account for. I have observed his manner change visibly when the conversation has taken an interesting turn, his countenance betraying some painful feeling. His spirits leave him. In the place of his usual friendly manner he adopts a distant one,

which extends its freezing influence to all around. I am wrong, I know, in telling you all this, but it is your fault for having introduced the subject; and now I will give you a journal of our usual day.

"Since I have recovered my strength, I rise every morning at five, and, accompanied by my father and your brother, enjoy a ride before breakfast. This is just before sun-rise. How you would admire with me the first burst of the morning, turning from dark blue to red the summits of these broken mountains, and glowing at a distance on the calm sea which bounds our view. There is a serenity and stillness of atmosphere to be only felt at this hour; a slight cool air descending from the tops of the mountains scarcely waves the long leaves of the plantain and fan-like tops of the coacoa-nut tree, and the transparency of this thin air produces a telescopic effect. The tops of the distant hills are brought near, and the naked eye can distinguish the streets and square of Kingston, and almost count the guns of the men-of-war riding at anchor at Port Royal.

"The air is really chilly; and though I wear my cloth habit, I am glad, whenever the narrow mountain-paths will admit of it, to allow my spirited little pony to canter on with me, to keep me comfortably warm. But over such roads! Seldom more than three feet in breadth, often not two; indeed, complete ledges cut round the sides of the mountains, and frequently when only a foot or two in breadth, with a high cliff on one side, and a precipice on the other. But it is wonderful how confident a little practice makes one.

"We return about eight, quite ready for breakfast. At nine or ten, the sea-breeze sets in. It is amusing to watch it coming; for, strange as it may sound, you really can see it. The mountain-breezes have by this time died away, and everywhere there is a dead calm. The sun is high and hot, and every object on which its rays play emits the dazzling reflection, the visible heat, if I may so call it, which you must have observed occasionally on a very warm summer's day in England, or over a heated brick-kiln or glass-furnace. This interval is the hottest part of the day. At

length the breeze makes its appearance to the eastward, darkening and rippling the lake-like sea as it sweeps along. You next trace it by the waving of the cocoa-nut trees which line the shore;—it comes nearer and nearer—the boughs of the cedars on St. Catherine's Peak are in motion; and, at last, as I lean panting with heat at the window, it reaches me. Oh! how delicious is the first mouthful as I drink it down fresh from the Atlantic!

"The scene usually changes towards noon. The collection of dark clouds which constantly hang around the 'Blue Mountain Peak' come rolling down their black masses, as if unable longer to sustain their own weight; and at this time of the year, a thunder-storm generally commences about noon every day. At first, it comes roaring down the range of mountains above us, and I hear the heavy rain rattling and pattering on the leaves of the woods higher up, long before it reaches us here. It next flashes from over our heads, the crash of thunder re-echoing from the mountain glens, while the rain pours in torrents. The thunder-clouds still descend, and in place of the

rain, we find ourselves in a thick mist. We are then actually in the cloud, and the lightning plays on a level with us, though the mist greatly obscures its effect. In a few minutes, the clouds sink totally beneath us, and assume the appearance of a black ocean rolling around our little island. The lightning continues to blaze below us. The sea-like mass at each flash opens for an instant, and looks like the crater of a volcano, while the report resounds from below. The rays of the sun reflected on its upper surface, gild to our eyes the very cloud which is thundering on the inhabitants below; and while I am basking in sunshine, I see the storm bursting over their heads. It seldom lasts more than two hours, and the dark volumes, which had gradually sunk far beneath, when exhausted, re-ascend in fleecy fragments, which, in passing by us to their former resting-place, Blue Mountain Peak, immerse us for a few minutes a second time in mist.

"The mountain air, now cooled by the rain, generally invites us to a second ride or walk, often to that part of the estate where the

negroes are at work gathering in the coffee-crop. I always feel delighted at witnessing their happy looks, and their anxiety to please their master. I need not tell you that they are kindly treated. I am delighted to find that they are grateful. 'God bless da buckra,' said an old woman to me the other day, as I was admiring a chubby grandchild in her arms; 'him really good!—me lib here since me pickninny myself, and me neber knew massa good like for him good.'

"We dine as the evenings close in, and afterwards I sometimes walk alone in a mango grove at the end of the garden, and listen to the rush of the cataracts dashing from fall to fall down the opposite peak, till they reach their rocky channel in the ravine; or to the night-wind rustling amidst the forests round St. Catherine's Peak; or watch the lamps of the fire-fly floating past me, or illuminating the canopy of boughs over my head.

"The yellow light of the moon now softens down the rugged outline of the peak, only to frown still darker when she is hidden by the drifting masses of clouds. The night-mist

spreading itself over the plain of Liguanea, gives it the appearance of a sheet of water ——But I shall only tire you with my descriptions, without at last being able to raise your ideas to anything nearly approaching the sublimity or the beauty of the original.

" Your brother left us this morning, to go to Kingston on business; he promised to return to-morrow or next day.

" Have you seen Ann Howard lately? Tell her that I received her letter, and will answer it soon; and tell her also——My father calls me to see something through a telescope. I have been looking. I must close my letter, as the messenger waits; but I must tell you that there is a dreadful fire at Port Royal. My father first discovered it when he called me. One-fourth of the town seems a sheet of flame; very little smoke, but my father says that they are all wooden houses. I trust your brother will not venture across from Kingston. He can have nothing but curiosity to carry him there. Adieu!

H. V."

Vernon had left Mount Edwards early in the morning with the intention of going to Port Royal to see Julia: he was stopped by meeting M'Nalty, and turned back to accompany him to the hospital. In consequence of this delay, it was nearly two in the afternoon before he reached the descent from the last and lowest chain of hills, just over the Hope tavern, and on the brink of the descent he drew his rein, intending to breathe his horse, before he attempted the steep path. He had, from this point, a bird's-eye view of the whole of Liguanea, and of the harbour, and he first strained his eyes towards the offing in the vain hope of welcoming the expected packet.

He next turned them towards Port Royal, where he intended passing the remainder of the day. A thick smoke and slight flame arrested his attention. "A dangerous place to make so large a fire in," thought he. "But what a blaze of flame bursts through! the whole town is burning!" and putting spurs to his horse he forced it to a long trot down the steep descent, at the imminent danger of both their necks. His alarm for Julia increased every in-

stant, and mounting, at the Hope tavern, a fresh horse which was in waiting there for him, he galloped to Kingston, and never slackened till he reached the wherry-wharf at the water's edge. Here, however, no boat for Port Royal was to be procured, though numbers loaded with fugitives were every instant arriving. He found himself in the midst of a crowd of distracted-looking people, crying, stamping, tearing their hair, and calling on their children, husbands, wives, or parents, whom they knew to be at Port Royal, without the possibility of helping them. As each boatful of flying wretches arrived, this crowd pressed forward to hear tidings; but the terrified fugitives only answered, "Port Royal burn! Port Royal burn!" All colours were mingled, all equally frightened and distressed. But while the whites endeavoured to conceal their feelings, the blacks and mulattoes gave theirs full vent. Their disordered dress showed the haste in which they had fled. Delicate-looking young women, some without shoes, others without hats, or half undressed, leapt from the boats as they touched the strand, and ran, as if

they thought the fire pursued them, over the sharp shingles, though their feet bled at every step.

Vernon in vain endeavoured to bribe the boatmen to go back and take him to the burning town. He offered large rewards, entreated and commanded in vain. In the general confusion, no one would attend to him. He was interrupted by Cæsar, who had followed him on a mule as far as the Hope tavern, but being unable to keep up, had only just overtaken him. He told Vernon that he knew where a boat was moored, at a wharf at a small distance, which he thought he and his master could manage alone. They seized this boat without waiting to find out the owner, and the sea-breeze filling the small sail, drove them rapidly on towards Port Royal.

The whole line of buildings on the harbour side of Port Royal was now enveloped in one sheet of yellow flame; all the town to leeward of the spot where it first commenced had caught the fire, which was fanned and driven on by the sea-breeze; and the flames having spread in this direction to the very

water's edge, were now extending themselves more slowly to the yet unconsumed part (about one-third) of the town, which was to windward of the spot where the conflagration commenced, the wind, like an insincere friend, while it seemed to blow it off, still fanning the fire.

When the boat had approached within three or four hundred yards of what was formerly the landing-place, but which now, wooden pier and all, was one line of flames, Vernon felt the heat thrown out by so large a burning mass intolerable, and he directed Cæsar to take down the sail, and to assist in rowing by a circuitous route to a landing-place, near the navy victualling office, to the windward of the fire. The flames seemed to increase every instant; every wharf and pier was on fire, and many vessels which had been made fast to them, caught, and drifted out, burning, to sea. Now and then a rum warehouse was reached, and the tiers of spirits in the lower stores, as soon as they caught, exploded like gunpowder, blowing up all above them. The barrels in the upper stories were thrown down, and many of them igniting as

they fell, poured out a sheet of vivid flame in the air.

By dint of hard rowing Vernon reached the landing-place at the navy victualling office, and scrambled through the loose sand along the shore till he reached the Artillery Barracks. Assisted by Cæsar, he then forced his way through the crowd which had assembled in the square in front of the barracks, the only part of the town now free from fire, and filled with the furniture and other valuables which the inhabitants had saved, and at last reached the street where he had left Julia.

The entrance was in flames; he rushed through it, followed closely by Cæsar, and, at the cost of a few scorches, gained the middle of the street, still free from fire. In one of the houses Julia lodged; but he now saw that the other end of the street was burning yet more fiercely than that through which he had scarcely been able to penetrate, and probably could not return.

Without personally heeding these chances, he rushed into the house. The hall or entrance-room was empty; every body seemed to have

fled. He sprang up the narrow stairs, crying out "Julia! Julia! are you here?" Still no answer. On pushing open the door of the bed-room where he had left her, he found it untenanted; but some of her clothes and ornaments were lying on the toilette-table, which proved that she had very lately been there, and the bed looked as if it had just been occupied. Another door, which was left ajar, opened to an upstairs sitting-room, which also communicated with the staircase. Cæsar had taken this turning, and his voice from the next room chilled Vernon, who was standing gazing at the empty bed, by exclaiming, "Hi massa! Here missis dead on the floor!" Running into the room, Vernon found her, half-dressed and fainting, on the ground. She had been in bed when the fire began, confined by a return of fever, produced probably by mental uneasiness. On its rapidly spreading around them, the other inhabitants of the lodging-house had escaped, leaving her to her fate. Roused by the instinctive feeling of self-preservation, she had thrown on part of her dress, and meant to attempt saving herself; but,

overcome with illness and terror, had fallen down in the fit in which Cæsar discovered her, just before Vernon entered the house.

Little time was left for deliberation, for the crackling noise of the fire was now heard in the neighbouring houses. In front, on each side, all was one devouring blaze, and no door or window opened towards the back of the house, the only side free from the flames.

The walls were built of brick, through which there was no time (had they even had the necessary tools) to effect a breach. Cæsar discovering their desperate situation, ran up and down the lessening space still free from flame, before the house; and finding every escape without impracticable, returned again within, threw himself down on the ground by his master, groaning out, "Hi! what me for do! What me for do! Me no able for run 'way, and de fire him come quick for catch me! Poor me! — me come run here for burn, like fly in candle."

Vernon was sitting on the ground by Julia, who slowly opened her eyes, and recognised him. She threw her arms round his neck,

and gave him one impassioned kiss: there was a tenderness tinctured with wildness in her manner as she first pressed her lips to his, and then pushed him from her.

"Leave me — leave me, Charles! Save yourself while you can. Never mind me — I wish to die. Don't quite forget poor Julia when you marry the lady. — God bless you!"

While saying this, she partly raised herself from the floor, and then sunk again, exhausted and senseless, into Vernon's arms. He lifted her from the ground, and removed her to a sofa at the further extremity of the house, on the side most distant from the flames; and throwing himself down beside her, pressed her in his arms, parted from off her death-like features the long tresses of her black hair, which had fallen unconfined down to her shoulders; and, while he watched her fine countenance, mentally resolved, "No — I cannot desert you here!" He just imprinted one kiss on Julia's forehead, and sunk his head on her shoulder.

In a few seconds a violent concussion, accompanied with a thundering crash, threw both

to the ground; the house seemed falling, a white sulphureous smoke filled the room, and Vernon, supposing his last moment was arrived, fervently offered up, as he supposed, his dying prayer.

The explosion was the signal, not of death but of escape. The street was near the Artillery Barracks, which the military were saving from the flames, by pulling down and blowing up all the intervening houses. A barrel of gunpowder had been rolled, for this purpose, into the next house, and the explosion not only blew up the whole of that house, but shook down a great part of the wall of that which contained Vernon, Julia, and Cæsar. The roof did not immediaiely fall in, and escape through a breach in the wall was practicable. Cæsar first sufficiently recovered presence of mind to discover this, and startling up, said to his master, —

"Massa, me no 'fraid now, fire no catch us. De wall fall down. Make haste — me able for carry you out of de fire. Come quick massa, or de house-top fall down on us."

Vernon and Cæsar lifted Julia from the

ground, bore her through the tottering breach, crossed the ruins of a parallel street already blown up, squeezed through the anxious crowd in front of the Artillery Barracks, and unheeded by them all, reached the boat, and drew breath freely when they found themselves again afloat, and looked back on the burning town.

Julia recovered herself before they crossed back to Kingston, where, on their arrival, Vernon took her to his lodgings.

"Well, Charles," said she, "I had wished to die there. I was afraid that you would be glad to hear that I should give you no more uneasiness. But as you did so much to save my life, you must wish me to live, and then you must still love me a little, and I shall be happy yet."

CHAPTER X.

Leaving Julia under the care of her mother, and much recovered, Vernon returned, three days after the day of the fire, to the mountain. Mrs. Vivian's health was not quite restored, and he persuaded his guests to remain a week or two longer; the heat of Kingston being still intolerable.

Another week passed rapidly. General Vivian and Vernon made several shooting excursions, and brought home ring-tailed pigeons and wild guinea-fowl, and the ladies explored every wild mountain-pass in the neighbourhood. On one occasion, the general and Vernon rambled so far in pursuit of game, that finding it too late to attempt getting home to dinner, tired and hungry as they were, they were glad to accept the invitation of a Mr. M'Lean, a neighbouring coffee planter. The preparations for an unexpected guest had delayed the dinner, and the

night being very dark, Vernon thought it best to take their host's advice, and remain where they were till the moon rose, so as to have light for their walk. At ten they set off, accompanied by a negro servant, whom Mr. M'Lean sent to guide his guests by a shorter road across Catherine's Peak to Mount Edwards.

The negro seemed very unwilling to show them this pass. "No good road, massa," said he to Vernon; "massa better go de oder pass massa come by."

"But Mr. M'Lean says he rode across this pass only a week ago, and the road along which he could ride must be good enough for us to walk over."

"Hi, massa — for me massa tell you so — den me must show massa da pass. And if massa good massa, den him no be angry if him see de meeting; no get Parson Charley put in de prison again at Kingston."

"Meeting! Parson Charley! what can the fellow mean?"

"I think," said the general, "I understand it; he means some Methodist meeting here-

abouts, probably in our way, at which that black rascal, Parson Charley as they call him, is to preach. I did not know that he had yet got out of the prison to which the Kingston corporation very properly sent him, for disseminating his methodistical doctrines among the slaves, holding meetings and preachings, and perverting our house servants. — Canting hypocrite!"

"And he is now released, and is again a preacher; do you think that the persecution which he has undergone will conciliate him? I should rather suppose that he has now the reputation of a martyr to assist the hostility which his sect, his colour, and his sufferings must make him feel towards the church of England and the whites."

"Why, perhaps so: I have no doubt that he is a most dangerous character."

"And rendered so chiefly, I dare say, by our intolerance. The warmth of a religious sect puts me in mind of an English fire; let it alone, and it will go out; stir it up, and it will flame. I should like to see this assembly. Boy, is the meeting in our way?"

"Dem meet in de bush, massa, top Kattern's Peak; massa no bring Parson Charley in trouble, me show massa da meeting."

The party now ascended the brow of a mountain, from the top of which a distant hum of many voices reached their ears, and soon figures could be distinguished in the clear moonlight on its summit. The wood on the level top had been cleared away to plant coffee, but the cultivation had been discontinued, probably from the situation being too high even for the coffee tree to thrive in the almost constant mist, and the ground had relapsed into its former state of wilderness.

The large area without high trees thus provided, had been selected as a rendezvous by the methodist negroes in the neighbourhood. On this night a larger meeting than usual had taken place, to congratulate their pastor on his release, and to offer up a public thanksgiving. The whole assembly, including women and children, amounted to nearly a thousand. Vernon and his party avoided observation as much as possible, and stopped under the shade of a tamarind tree, as soon as they were near

enough to see the congregation and hear the preacher.

The multitude were all kneeling: Parson Charley was standing on the projecting bough of an old cotton tree, elevated about ten feet from his hearers. He was an old grey-headed negro, and was praying in a strong clear voice, but in the broken English (except where he quoted Scripture) common to his race. His words were repeated after him in a hollow murmur by a thousand voices beneath; he appeared, as they came within hearing distance, to have been employed in offering up prayers for the success of the endeavours made in England by the abolitionists for the improvement of negro slavery.

"God bless da good man, Massa Wilberforce! Strengthen him, O Lord, and establish him! Make him lib long for take our part; and grant dat we may be wordey in anoder and a better world, to meet our benefactor in him glory. Amen! Amen!"

After an interval of a few minutes, a sermon followed: the text was from the 11th chapter of St. Luke, the 46th and 52d verses.

"Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."

"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in, ye hindered."

From this text many allusions were made to the preacher's recent imprisonment, and to the laws made by the Kingston corporation to suppress the preaching of the Gospel. He next drew comparisons between the situations, here and hereafter, of a wicked master and a Christian slave, quoting many of the texts which condemn riches and praise poverty.

"So, my bredren, it always has been; God make good laws, send him Gospel for every body, for save black man as well as for save white man. Debble come, make wicked man too strong, try for stop preach da Gospel, put God's preacher in de prison.

"God make ebery man free. Debble come make wicked man strong, for make him broder slave. But all dis no last for ebber. Death

come for all, for poor and for rich, for buckra and for neger. Den buckra man like for de parable of de rich man, and Lazarus de poor neger. When de rich buckra man lib in dis world, den him hab great house for lib in, wear red coat, and n'yam feast ebery day. Lazarus him poor neger hab yaws, lie at de great house door, beg massa hard for de crum fall from him table. Soon death come. Rich massa him die, poor neger him die.

"Rich buckra him go to de debble, where him burn. Poor neger him go to Abraham bosom, where him hear da buckra in torment beg him hard for bring him drop of water. But Massa Abraham him answer, 'Thou in thy time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'"

"What an incendiary the fellow is!" said the general, as they passed on. "You surely must agree with me as to the mischief which such a rascal preaching such doctrine must do."

"Yes; the mischief is very apparent. But how is it now to be prevented? The

planters have hitherto omitted to inculcate any religion amongst their negroes. They have neglected sowing the good seed. The enemy is amongst them sowing the tares. Let them look to the fruit."

A change of weather, and a continuance of tropical rain, put a stop to out-of-doors amusements, and compelled the party to depend entirely on each other's society. This the elders found dull work enough; not so Emily and Vernon, who made chess, backgammon, or drafts an excuse during the long mornings for continual tête-à-têtes.

Mrs. Vivian had too much tact to interrupt these interviews; the general either occupied himself with writing, or reading newspapers, or adopted the creole manner of getting through the day, and went to sleep. So that the young people were generally left together for several hours every morning. This lasted for three or four days; but still Vernon never committed himself by any open declaration. His looks, indeed, and his manner could not be misunderstood, and he was frequently carried far beyond the limits which he mentally prescribed

to himself. But when on the verge of laying every feeling open, he suddenly shrunk back, his manner changed; and the frank Emily was equally puzzled and displeased.

"What a gale of wind it blows!" observed she, as they were sitting over their chess-table, after breakfast, four or five days after the heavy rains had set in.

"Oh, it is nothing," said Vernon, "(check to your queen); we are so high up here, and so exposed, that every blast of wind sounds to us as if it had double its real force. It is very cold though; the thermometer, I see, is only sixty-eight. I will put on another log."

"Nay, but do look at that mango tree at the side of the garden, how it bends; and that date tree next it is waving like a peacock's feather to the wind, which seems to blow from all quarters at once. Look! Oh look, Mr. Vernon!"

The mango tree was at this instant torn up by the roots, whirled into the air, and carried out of sight.

"My dearest Miss Vivian," said Vernon, "do not be so alarmed. It does indeed blow a

gale ; but this is a very substantial house, and has weathered many real West Indian hurricanes, even if this gale of wind should increase to one."

" A hurricane, by God ! Vernon," said the general, entering the room in his flannel dressing-gown, just as he had been roused from his mid-day nap.

" Oh general, general !" said Mrs. Vivian, running in also, " what shall we do ? Old Juba tells me this is a hurricane. A real hurricane ! We shall all be blown away, like the trees in the garden that I see flying into the air like so many large feathers."

" No be 'fraid massa," said Cæsar, entering the room ; " him hurricane for true, but me know hurricane worser dan dis no blow great house down. Him really 'trong 'tone house ; no like for neger house — poor neger house all blow 'way."

Fresh gusts of wind fast succeeded each other with increased violence. Soon not one of the beautiful trees in the garden was left standing ; cedar, orange, apple, and all the larger trees being torn up by the roots, while

the slender stems of the cocoa-nut, cabbage, and date trees were snapped off in the middle.

The party were next terrified by the walls of the house which they were in, shaking and cracking; and a general rush towards the door took place.

Hardly had they gained the other wing of the house, when that which they had just quitted, walls and all, gave way, though, as Cæsar had observed, a most substantial building. The roof entire, without loss of a single shingle or beam, was carried up into the air, by the wind getting under it, and the walls fell in with a tremendous crash.

The boards and beams of the two floorings were seen rushing through the air, knocking down all that came in contact with them. Little time, however, was left for observation, each successive blast roared louder and louder, and the remaining part of the house threatened every instant to crush its inhabitants.

They stood for some seconds; the women in speechless terror, and Vernon and the general in vain attempting to conceal their own alarm, while trying to moderate that of their companions.

Suddenly, the wind getting under the remaining part of the roof (since the fall of wing totally unprotected), tore it up also, throwing down within the walls the ceiling and some of the beams, but carrying away the greater part to a distance.

By one of the timbers which fell within, Vernon was knocked down, not, however, so seriously hurt but that he rose immediately, and supported Mrs. Vivian (the general having hurried forward Emily) out of the ruins, expecting that the now unroofed walls would instantly fall in.

As they gained the outer door they were in imminent danger of being taken off their legs by the force of the wind, and hurled through the air like the beams of the roof which were spinning round in the eddies of the wind.

Cæsar's experience and presence of mind saved them from this fate, by pulling down the general and Emily with him, as they reached the door, and calling out to them, and to Vernon and Mrs. Vivian as they followed, —

" Massa no try for walk, or wind blow

'trong carry massa 'way, — blow him into de gulley! Massa lie down crawl like for pickininny on de ground."

And creeping on all-fours in this way, they took refuge in the kitchen, — a low, almost circular out-house built of stone; and barring the door against the blast, flattered themselves that they were secure. They were disappointed; for after they had witnessed (through the narrow loop-hole window) the blowing down of the coffee store, the overseer's house, the neighbouring negro-houses, and every possible place of refuge; not a tree standing, — beams, trees, branches, wooden shingles with large nails in them, flying about in every direction, carrying destruction to every living thing they encountered, — the night coming on, the rain pouring in torrents, and the gale increasing, the kitchen gave way, injuring nearly all, more or less, but none severely.

As a last resource, and almost a forlorn one, the terrified party next betook themselves to a cellar under the ruins of the Great House, endeavouring to hope, that if the walls fell in (and they heard stones dropping from them

every instant), the flooring above their heads might not be beaten in. This chance, so feeble as scarcely to support a hope, afforded the only possibility of escape.

It was now six in the evening, and the night was setting in. The cellar was about fourteen feet square, and knee-deep in water, being filled from the rain which was dripping through the unroofed flooring above, and from the overflowings of a gutter, swelled into a rivulet which ran beside the house. The miserable party were exposed to a continued shower-bath from the streams of rain which poured through, and in so cold a climate, and so very cold an evening, in the instant apprehension of being crushed to death, or horribly mangled, they had to anticipate the events of the coming night. They consisted of General Vivian, his wife and daughter, Vernon, Mr. Scott the overseer (who had preceded them to their place of shelter on his own house being blown down), Murphy the book-keeper, Cæsar, and three other black men, all house servants, and four negro women, two of whom had infants in their arms.

There was one sheltered corner where Mrs. Vivian, as the greatest invalid, was accommodated with a seat on an empty flour-barrel. Emily stood on a loose plank which Vernon contrived to fix against the wall sufficiently high to raise her from the stream of water which ran through the cellar.

Vernon stood next to her, so near that as he leant his head against the wall, it almost touched hers. The rest of the party either stood leaning against the shaking walls, or paced up and down their narrow cell. Two were placed with their backs against the door to prevent the wind from bursting its bolts: this duty the men took by turns.

Mr. Scott, who was a man of considerable enterprize, volunteered to make a sally, and to attempt getting into the adjoining cellar, where the stock of wine and spirits was kept. He succeeded and returned safe, bringing back with him two bottles of rum, and one of Madeira. One bottle of rum was divided amongst the men present, and a small part of the Madeira was drank by the ladies, and the rest by the negro women.

One of the servants, on taking refuge in the cellar, had brought with him a candle in a lantern: it was hung up in the driest corner, and threw a glimmering light over the room.

The countenances of all betrayed their feelings. The whites seemed most to dread being crushed to death; while their present sufferings from cold, wet, and bruises, seemed, in the negroes, to overpower every other sensation.

"Oh, my dear mother," said Emily, "even if the walls do not crush us when they fall, yet still how will your health stand this dreadful trial? The wet and the cold ——"

"Nay, my dear child, I am very well; I wish you would change places with me, for where you are the wet drips on you."

"Oh, never mind me, I am not very cold; but my dear father, and you Mr. Vernon, you must suffer dreadfully standing in the water."

"Can't help it," replied the general, sulkily.

"Is there no other possible place of shelter, Mr. Scott?" said Vernon. "We can stand it well enough, but how Mrs. and Miss Vivian must suffer here!"

"No, I fear none; unless we attempt to

reach the old cattle mill, which, being a circular and a stone building, may yet be standing: but it is at a considerable distance, and dark as it is, it would be almost madness to attempt getting there."

"I will try and explore it," said Vernon.

"Oh, no, no, Mr. Vernon," said Emily; "don't attempt it, pray don't, pray stay here."

"Can you suppose, Miss Vivian," said Vernon, in a very low, but distinct, and almost calm whisper, "that I value life for its own sake, or that I would not give fifty such lives as mine for the chance of making yours safe?" He seized Miss Vivian's hand as he said this, and pressed it to his lips; a gentle pressure returned his, and she then attempted to draw back her hand, when one of the walls of the house above gave way before the blast, which luckily hurled the stones from, instead of upon, the cellar; but still a great part fell on the boarded flooring over their heads with a tremendous crash. All conceived that it was the fall of the whole house; it was followed by the scream of the women and children, and, as they supposed, the dying prayer of the men.

Vernon bent over the board on which Miss Vivian was leaning, threw his arm around her waist, and exclaimed, "We will die together!" The substantial flooring, however, withstood the shock, and after the breathless pause of a few seconds, Emily struggled from Vernon and freed herself. Both were too much agitated to speak, and the attention of every other person present was confined to his own suffering and danger.

"Mr. Scott," said Vernon in a low voice, "will you accompany me, and try to reach this mill-house, and see if it is standing?"

"I will; but I warn you of the risk."

"Never mind that, except on your own account. General — Mrs. Vivian, good bye; Emily, if I never see you more, sometimes think of me. Come, Scott."

Mr. Scott was leaning against the door, and Vernon close to him, so that to prevent or even remonstrate was impossible; and so selfish is fear, that though all were aware of the danger of the adventure, and of the remoteness of the hope that it could be of service, there was not one probably, excepting Emily,

who wished to stop them. It was a slight glimmering of hope, but slight as it was, every one was ready to purchase it by the risk, however great, of another. Such, indeed, is the restless irksomeness of protracted apprehension, that, desperate as the enterprise seemed, if Vernon or Scott had declined it, there was scarce a man present who would not have taken his place. Emily alone attempted to call them back; but her voice was drowned in the rush of wind as the door was suddenly and cautiously opened to let them pass, and out they sallied.

"They will be back in a quarter of an hour," said the general, rather to keep up his spirits by hearing an expression of hope, though even in his own voice, than for the benefit of his hearers; but nobody answered. Emily attempted to echo his hopes, but felt a tightness across her chest, and dryness in her throat, which rendered her incapable of speaking.

"Haven't they been gone a quarter of an hour?" asked Mrs. Vivian, in a minute or two's time.

"Not quite, I believe," replied her husband: and there was another silence, which was

broken by the harsh grating of the ruins on the boards above their heads, as a blast, more violent apparently than any previous one, rolled them over and over, and swept them before it. The sudden gust subsided, and there was another pause. Even the general felt his attempts at self-encouragement fruitless. Soon after a knocking was heard at the door, and as it was opened, in came one of the messengers.

"Thank God, you have returned safe!" said Emily Vivian, as Vernon entered. "Where is Mr. Scott?"

"Have we to go to the mill-house?" asked the general.

"Oh dear, Mr. Vernon, what shall we do?" said Mrs. Vivian.

"Take some of this, sir," said Murphy the book-keeper, offering him the rum-bottle; "a drop of the cratur will warm you."

"The mill-house is down," answered he, "and it is impossible to attempt moving. Poor Scott was blown away into the ravine; I was nearly carried off too. Come what will, I fear our only chance will be to await the issue of the night here."

A sigh or a groan followed the intelligence from most of the hearers. Each endeavoured to persuade himself that the danger was less than it appeared; but whenever a stone dropped on the sounding flooring above their heads, the start of the men, the screams of the women, and the countenances of all, betrayed their terror.

Vernon alone did not feel thoroughly wretched; he was naturally not very susceptible of fear, and what he did feel was rather for another than himself. It had not, therefore, the degrading consciousness, or the exclusive possession of the mind, which accompany personal terror; and dreadful as his situation appeared, it contained sources of enjoyment as great, perhaps greater, than of suffering. General Vivian had taken the post which he had formerly occupied next to Emily, so that he could not resume their former conversation, if conversation it can be called. But there was an abandonment in her countenance, a softness in her blue eyes as they were withdrawn when his glance encountered them, a general languor and surrender in her whole expression, which

convinced him (and what lover is not easily convinced), that if he lived he should live happy, if he died he should die beloved.

Hour after hour crept slowly on in their prison. The fury of the storm abated gradually towards morning, and at length they could perceive the white light of dawn through the crevices of the door and the beams above; and after the longest and most fearful night that any of the party had ever experienced, as the sun rose at six in the morning, the wind and rain entirely ceased, and they could creep from their dungeon, and view the scene of destruction.

Not a house, a shed, or a negro-hut was left standing. One wing of the house was entirely swept away, and the remainder unroofed. All communication was cut off, as every rivulet was swelled by the rain to an impassable river, rushing from its mountain head with immense rapidity towards the plains, and rolling down with it trunks of trees, large rocks, or beams of houses, with such force, as would render an attempt to cross it destruction.

Shortly after day-break, to the surprise and

delight of every one, but especially of Vernon, who had induced him to leave the cellar, Mr. Scott rejoined them, and recounted his adventures.

When Vernon and he had first sallied, it was nearly pitch-dark, and though crawling on the ground, and holding by every thing that came in their way, they were in constant apprehension of being taken off the ground, and hurled away. Their path to the old mill-house lay across a back court, the distance being about three hundred yards. Before they had got more than half way, a violent gust of wind lifted them both off the ground, carried Vernon about fifteen yards forward, and lodged him in a prickly pear-bush, where, forced on the long spiky thorns with which every part of this shrub is covered, he could not help crying out from pain.

Mr. Scott, who had brought up against the stump of a calabash tree close by, alarmed by his cries, demanded—

"Mr. Vernon, how are you? are you hurt? I fear some beam has struck you?"

"No; but I am blown into a prickly pear

tree, and impaled on its spikes, and cannot get out. Do, Scott, come and assist me."

"I cannot. I cannot move myself. If I were for an instant to let go this old stump to which I cling, my next move would be being blown down into the gulley on our right."

A fresh gust in another direction dislodged Vernon from his place of torment; but, to his infinite consternation, he called in vain to Scott; and after shouting his name till he was hoarse, he was obliged to conclude that the wind had swept him away. Alone he groped his way to the mill-house, but found it in ruins, a mere heap of stones; and even if it had been standing, to reach it, he was now aware, would be impossible for the women of his party. He therefore turned back, and succeeded, as we have seen, in groping his way to the underground cellar.

On being carried away this second time by the force of the gale, Scott was hurried over the edge of the ravine, and in a second or two found himself lodged in one of the topmost boughs of a tamarind tree, which was waving violently to the wind: here he clung, as he

supposed, for nearly half an hour, till the branch on which he rested was torn off, and dashed to the ground; and he found himself on the wooded side of a deep glen or gully, through which there was a track leading to a detached cluster of negro-houses. He endeavoured to follow this, and after encountering numerous obstacles, reached their site. The hurricane had swept them all away. He recollected that an old watchman occupied a hut in a sheltered nook round the promontory on which he then stood. He found it yet standing, though shaking alarmingly. The only tenants were old Scipio, the watchman, and his aged wife. The wife was crying and muttering in a corner, over the embers of a wood-fire, the light of which discovered Scipio himself on his knees, clinging to the central pillar of his house, the stem of a young cedar tree planted deeply in the ground in the middle of the hut, and reaching to the centre of the roof, so as to form its principal support, and called the "main crutch." But the piteous prayer of the poor old man, as he rolled about his eyes, and shook his white woolly head,—

"Pray, Massa God A'mighty! Do, Massa God A'mighty! Let the man-crutch stand!" extorted a smile, even at that moment, from Mr. Scott. The "main-crutch" did stand, and preserved the hut, till day-break allowed him to rejoin the rest of the houseless party.

As the morning advanced, a general assembly of the negroes took place: three were found missing, one man and two women. It was afterwards ascertained that they were blown away, carried down to one of the mountain torrents, and there drowned. Nearly all the rest were allowed to employ themselves in repairing, or building anew, their ruined huts. A few were reserved to erect from the ruins of the Great House a temporary retreat to serve its buckra inmates till the rivers subsided, and it might be possible to escape to the nearest standing dwelling.

Before night, a shelter was effected by covering over the overseer's house, which had been only unroofed by the storm. A sufficient quantity of the estate provisions were got out of the cellars of the ruin to supply an ample, though not a sumptuous repast.

"Good for massa, now," observed old Juba. "Massa order good provision for him negers. No stinkee-stinkee and mash-mash, but good salt beef, good salt fish. Now massa able for n'yam it himself. Massa no been able for n'yam what Missa Tomlins get for poor neger. Massa been forced for starve before him n'yam it."

This was too busy a day for any of the party to enter into explanations. Very little of what Vernon had said was overheard by General or Mrs. Vivian, drowned as every sound was in the roar of the hurricane, and the attention engrossed by the imminent danger of the moment. What little was overheard they thought it best not to appear to have noticed, but left the young people to themselves.

CHAPTER XI.

EARLY the next morning, while Vernon was superintending the repairs, Emily walked beyond the garden, towards the road leading to Kingston. The way was almost impassable from the fallen trees which lay across it. She had sometimes to make a circuit round a cotton tree, as it lay with its roots uppermost, sometimes to climb over the trunks of cedar or cashew trees piled one on another.

All around her was desolation, yet notwithstanding her fatigue, her spirits never felt so buoyant, or her hopes so bright. It was certain that Vernon loved her, and she now found it certain too, though she had before tried to disguise it to herself, that she loved him.

Again and again, she retraced all that he had said, all that he had looked, on that eventful night. Every word, every tone of his voice, still rung in her ear. The circumstances

under which they stood, the subdued feeling, the calm tone in which he spoke, left her no doubt of his sincerity. She forgot the inconsistencies of his former conduct; the delight which he had shown in her society, and his hesitation when circumstances seemed to call him to express it. Or if she recurred to them, it was only to contrast the happiness of her present certainty with the pain which she now allowed herself to confess that she had felt in her former doubts.

It was not only the sunshiny prospect of her future life that delighted her, but she felt her own self-estimation raised by having obtained the affection of a man of sense and of education. She thought of the delight of having her friend Harriet as a sister. She composed over and over in her mind the letter in which she should communicate it. She thought of her next meeting with Vernon, what he would say, and how she should answer him. Fifty times she varied the conversation that would take place, and always preferred the last. Wrapped in the delights of a reverie which no one enjoys more than once in a life, she

reached at last the bank of the once rivulet, now a broad river, which ran across the gulley beneath, and found herself with astonishment nearly a mile from the house.

Though a good deal sunk, the torrent seemed yet formidable; its yellow waters rolling down trunks of trees, which whirled and spun round in the eddies which their rapid motion occasioned. Just as she was turning back, a negro, whom she thought that she recollected as having carried messages from Vernon to the general when in Kingston, appeared on the other side, armed with a long pole. She stopped to witness his attempt at crossing, which seemed attended with risk. The water was about breast-high in the deepest part, but the rapidity of the current was so great, that none but a strong, active, and experienced man could keep his legs. If he fell he would be rolled over and over, and hurried down the stream, without a chance of saving himself. To these dangers must be added that of being struck by the large rolling rocks and trunks of trees.

Steadying himself with his pole, the negro

encountered all, watching for each rolling fragment of rock; sometimes leaping over it with his pole, sometimes running forward, or drawing backwards to avoid it. At length he reached the opposite side of the river.

"Who are you?" asked Miss Vivian.

"Me Vulcan."

"And where do you come from, Vulcan? whom do you belong to?"

"Me belong to Massa Vernon, and me come from Kingston. Bring him paper from him wife."

"His wife! You must be mad! It cannot be Mr. Vernon you mean."

"Yes, missis, me mean Massa Vernon for me massa. Me bring him paper from him wife, Miss Julia; one brown lady lib in Kingston. Massa hab him for wife long time."

"I cannot, I will not, believe this," said Emily, thinking aloud.

"Yes, missis, massa hab wife long time, and him good brown lady; no use poor neger ill."

To confirm his story, at the doubt of which

he felt indignant, he put into Miss Vivian's hand an unwafered note, saying,—

"Look, missis; here da paper."

Emily just glanced her eye over the superscription, "To Captain Charles Vernon, Mount Edwards," written in unformed feminine characters. She gave back the letter to Vulcan, and turned towards the house, while he slowly followed, prevented by his ideas of respect from passing her.

It would be dangerous to attempt to describe her feelings as she returned. It was evident that Vernon was unworthy of her. All her bright fabric of happiness was dashed to pieces, and the blow came from the dearest hand. At first she felt stunned by the shock. It was so sudden, so irresistible, so unlike any calamity, or any state of events that she had prepared herself for, that she could not summon her resolution or her presence of mind to support and encounter it. Vernon faithless and treacherous! Vernon professing attachment to her, and living with another! Did he intend to desert this Miss Julia? What inconstancy! Did he intend to retain her?

What indelicacy and what vice! It was impossible. All his tenderness, all his generosity, all that she had heard of the frankness and sincerity of his character came crowding on her recollection.

Twice she turned to repeat her cross-examination of Vulcan, and twice the fear of betraying her emotion to a slave stopped her short. Again the evidence of his delinquency seemed strong. What could be Vulcan's motive for a lie? His manner was that of a man, who lets out indiscreetly a secret of which he does not know the importance. It tallied, too, with all the mysteriousness of Vernon's conduct. It explained all the inconsistencies of his manner. She felt, when she tried to consider it calmly, that it was scarcely possible to doubt. Writhing under the severity of this conflict, — a conflict which no one can estimate who has not suffered the severest of all calamities, the necessity of changing love for resentment or contempt, — she walked on almost unconsciously towards the house with as much rapidity as the embarrassed state of the road would admit. At the door she per-

ceived Vernon watching her approach. As he advanced, she returned his salutation in a tone which she attempted to render easy, and which to a common observer would have seemed so, but which to him carried an indescribable appearance of emotion. Immediately afterwards he recognised Vulcan.

"Paper for you, massa," said Vulcan. Vernon's eye caught the well-known writing, and he instantly felt that Emily's was fixed on him. He felt his face, his very lips turn white, and his hand trembled so that he could scarcely take the letter. Emily looked at him for an instant, the bitterest perhaps in her whole life, and passed on.

"Did you show this letter to that lady?" asked he, as soon as he could speak.

"No, massa."

"Did you tell her whom it was from?"

"No, massa."

For the negro, though he had not caution enough to save him from an indiscretion, had too much cunning not to perceive that he had been guilty of one.

"Did she say anything to you?"

" She ask me who me belong to. Me tell her me belong to Massa Vernon."

" Did she ask anything more ? "

" She ask where me come from. Me say me come from Kingston."

" Was that all ? "

" Dat all, massa."

A little relieved, but smarting under the consciousness of misconduct, and fears of detection, Vernon now opened the note which had occasioned so much agitation. It was as follows : —

" My dear Charles,

" I am very much alarmed at the hurricane, your house is so exposed to the wind ; and as Vulcan wishes to undertake the journey to the mountain, (he has, you know, a wife on the estate whom he is very anxious about, more so, I fear, than you are for poor me,) I have allowed him to go. Pray write me a few lines in return, to assure me of your safety.

" I hope that, as soon as the rivers have fallen a little, you will come down. I long to see you again, my dear Charles. I want your

advice as to making some arrangements for an event which will soon take place.

"Your poor, fond, affectionate

"JULIA."

"P. S. Two or three houses here are blown down, also one of the hospitals at Camp, and many of the poor sick soldiers much hurt; and nearly all the ships at Port Royal have been blown on shore."

Vernon wrote a hasty answer to say that he was safe, and would be at Kingston as soon as the roads were passable; and, anxious and irresolute both as to his own conduct and Emily's suspicions, entered the breakfast-room, where he found the whole party assembled.

From Emily, carefully as he watched her, he could learn nothing. Her spirits seemed high, and her manner unconstrained. He thought indeed that he could perceive a sort of effort in her spirits. Her conversation seemed to him more a determination to employ herself on any subject rather than on herself, than the overflowing of a mind at ease; and he sometimes thought that there was a

forced familiarity in her address to him. Totally incapable of forming any plan of conduct, he resolved on the middle course of avoiding another tête-à-tête till he had seen Julia (although he could come to no decision regarding her); yet when Emily retired with her mother after breakfast, he could not help casting a longing eye to the chess-board, which had been so often the pretext of their meetings, and which was the first piece of furniture that he had ferretted out from under the ruins. Her eye, however, did not follow his, and as they quitted the room, he turned towards the fields, and endeavoured to busy himself in overlooking the construction of the negro houses. At dinner he felt still more convinced that something had altered Emily's feelings since the night of the hurricane. She talked and laughed perhaps more than usual, but there was a restlessness in her manner, an impatience of silence, an eagerness to find topics, and an anxiety not to let them drop, and a melancholy expression when inattentive, which he never had observed before. She still addressed her conversation sometimes to him,

and with expressions of familiarity and esteem; but she no longer appeared to do so unconsciously, still less to do it with pleasure. He thought that he could perceive a painful effort not to appear changed. And to what could this change be owing? Till the night of the hurricane she had appeared to enjoy his society: on that night she had made him no answer, circumstances made it impossible; but her eyes, and well he had treasured every glance of them, told nothing but confession and surrender. They had had no subsequent explanation, but that had been prevented the first day by the bustle of repair and removal, the next by obstacles occasioned by herself. The truth flashed still more and more upon him. He could not suspect her of caprice or coquetry; both were incompatible with the pride and sincerity of her character. What grounds could there be for the alteration, but her having discovered the only part of his conduct that he would have wished concealed? Bitterly did he at one time lament his connection with Julia, which at its commencement had been so delightful; and then, when all his

obligations to her, her attachment, his life preserved by her care, rose in judgment against him, he execrated his own ingratitude and inconstancy, and regretted still more bitterly that he had ever seen Miss Vivian. He tried to force himself even to rejoice that the discovery had been made. He tried to believe that he ought to feel satisfied that there was now no risk of his again breaking the promise which he had kept, under every temptation, till the moment when he believed that its obligation was on the point of being dissolved by death. His judgment and his conscience forced these truths on his mind, and he endeavoured to acquiesce in them, but in vain.

He left the dining-room soon after the ladies, and though still fancying himself anxious to avoid a meeting with Emily, took the walk in which he knew he was most likely to find her. At every turn he feared to meet her; every object that in the dusk he could mistake for her, made him tremble; yet though hoping to escape her, he wandered on and on, through every path which he recollected her ever using; till tired, and in fact disappointed, he returned

to tea, and soon after to a sleepless bed, restless and humiliated, feeling that he had sacrificed his happiness by his own fault, envying everybody the capability of enjoyment, and, above all, envying Emily the ease with which she sacrificed him, and the little pain which the effort seemed to cost her.

Here he was mistaken; she had the inestimable advantage over him of a good conscience and self-approbation, but the effort and the sacrifice probably cost her more than they did him. Her feelings were not on the surface; her affection never vented itself in professions, or her grief in lamentation; but the repression of the sign did not, as perhaps it more frequently does, deaden the emotion. All her feelings, except anger, were strong; from anger she was preserved by pride, if that can be called pride which consisted in a high value for her own approbation, and a lofty moral standard. She had too much candour to feel resentment, unless she thought that the person who occasioned her evil was acting ill; and if he was acting ill, he ceased to be an equal, and in ceasing to be an equal, ceased to be an

object worthy of anger. The general effect of an injury was, therefore, to produce in her pity for the person who attempted it, a wish to punish in order to prevent a renewal, but very little of the personal feelings of irritation and wounded vanity which we usually call anger. But her mind was as affectionate as it was firm ; her love for Vernon had slowly grown, his generosity, his honour in a most corrupt, and his humanity in a most oppressive, country, his courage and enterprize, his talents, and above all his apparently devoted love to her, had given him a hold on her which his misconduct could not loosen without laceration. It was impossible to doubt that misconduct ; no one not in love could have doubted it after Vulcan's story : but his agitation when he met them at the door, the guilty look of inquiry which he threw towards her as his eye caught the direction of the note, the humiliated consciousness which had appeared in his countenance ever since, were proofs which were sufficient even for Emily. She felt, or thought that she felt, that she should never be happy again ; that she should never again trust to her

own judgment of men ; but she resolved to rely for her affections on her female friends and her family, for her pleasures on doing her duty, and for her hopes on religion ; and to endeavour to believe that though to have known Vernon was a great misfortune, and to have been deceived in him a still greater, yet that it was only one of the calamities with which, for good reasons, life is scattered, and which she had resolution to support and perseverance to conquer.

Full of these thoughts, Miss Vivian, after a night not much better than Vernon's, rose rather late the next morning, and found every one in the bustle of preparation. The road to an unruined house in the neighbourhood was thought practicable, and a removal had been accordingly determined on : the distance was about three miles, but the roads were in many places entirely swept away, or blocked up by fallen trees. Although ponies were provided for the ladies, they were obliged to walk, or rather scramble, the greater part of the way ; the bushes, and the few large trees which were left standing, were stripped of their leaves, and

the face of the whole country presented the appearance of an English winter, leafless trees and swollen muddy streams.

More than half the coffee crop had already been picked, but the ungathered part was entirely lost. Many of the finest coffee trees were torn up by the roots, or their boughs broken off. Nearly every plantain-tree (the fruit of which is a principal part of the food of the negroes) was levelled.

At length, after surmounting several formidable obstacles, the party arrived at the Mansion House of Prospect Hill, the nearest habitation left standing. They were hospitably received by Mr. M'Lean, the overseer of the property, the owner being one of the absentees in England.

Mr. M'Lean recommended his guests to stay with him for the remainder of the day, promising to send two or three very strong gangs of negroes to repair the roads where practicable, or open fresh ones, which by the morrow, or day after, might enable them to reach the plains, and pursue their journey to Kingston. The travellers, already tired and

hungry, were well-pleased to remain and enjoy an excellent creole dinner, which made its appearance shortly after their arrival.

"I have just been looking at the new road which our people are making," said Mr. M'Lean, entering the breakfast-parlour, next morning, "and I think that you, general, or Mr. Vernon, might accomplish a descent to the lowlands; but it will never do for the ladies; so I hope to have the pleasure of their company a day or two longer."

"You are very good, sir," answered the general, "but a soldier's wife and daughter must learn to overcome difficulties. They will attempt it, at any rate, with me this morning, for I am very anxious to get back; I have too long been absent from my duty, and I cannot leave them behind."

In an hour two mules were at the door for the ladies, and horses for the men, and the party slowly wound round the side of the mountain on which the Great House of Prospect Hill was situated.

The first serious obstacle was a rivulet now swelled to a river, which rushed through the

first ravine that crossed their road. This they passed without accident, after watching for a few minutes for an interval when the stream showed none of the rolling rocks and trunks of trees, which were still hurried along with its muddy waters down its precipitous descent. The water in the mid-channel reached up to the horses' girths. They then essayed a new road, cut by the joint labours of Vernon's and M'Lean's negroes through the forest which covered the steep side of the next range of mountains. The former pass had been made beside the rivulet, and wound round the foot of the hill by a circuitous, but more level route. This the waters had entirely swept away; the new path had been cut zigzag up the side of the hill; the brushwood and bushes being cleared away, and the large trees, or such of them as had not been torn up by the hurricane, grubbed up by the roots, and the whole levelled as well as the time would allow. But the loose freshly-dug earth required constant attention, and considerable strength of arm, to prevent the horses and mules from falling as they stumbled through it.

The whole party, as they descended, felt oppressed by the unaccustomed heat. Vernon was anxious and silent, resolved to avoid another tête-à-tête with Emily, but hoping and dreading that the accidents of the road might force one; and drawing, from the vigilance with which he watched every word and look, conclusions more and more unfavourable. Mrs. Vivian was, as usual, restless and fidgetty: perplexed by Vernon's manner, very anxious to know what had happened, but not seeing how to find it out.

The general, who seldom bestowed much conversation on his own family, and now found no one else willing to listen to him, jogged on in front of the line, ruminating of field days and court-martials, and calling to those behind to keep up. Two or three endeavours were made by Emily to excite a general conversation, but after apparently succeeding for a few minutes, they all failed, and she gave up the attempt; for which, indeed, her state of spirits little qualified her, and proceeded in silence close behind her mother, bitterly thinking what a change in all her hopes and feelings the events

of the last month had produced. At its beginning, her heart was just brightening with the first dawn of a first attachment. For three weeks that attachment gradually rose brighter and stronger: for a day she had fancied herself happy without hazard of an alloy — one instant had destroyed that happiness for ever. She now felt the advantage of the pride which she had once thought a defect in her character. Whether that quality be a virtue or a vice, of course depends on its objects and degree; but its value as a support against evil, especially against the evil inflicted by others, all who possess it, and have lived enough to want its assistance, must have felt.

The weaker texture of Vernon's character prevented his ever having any great share of it, and that share was almost destroyed by the irresolution and falsehood of his recent conduct. He felt every glance of Emily's eye shoot through him, and breaking from the party the instant they reached the plains, on the plea of business with his merchant, he retired to his lodgings in Kingston, humiliated and dejected, with the double misery of failure and miscon-

duct; and in no good humour towards his poor affectionate Julia, who awaited him there with all the eagerness of love.

"Thank God, here you are safe at last!" said Julia, as Vernon entered his lodgings, while she threw her arms round his neck and sobbed, overcome with joy. For the first second or two, her delight was too excessive to discover any change in his manner; but the next moment she cast a reproachful look at his countenance, and said, "Why Charles, you look wretchedly, and I have counted the moments till your return; and now, when at last you do come, it is only to make me miserable with your unhappy looks. Oh, Charles, how you are altered!"

"Not at all, my dear Julia," said he, ashamed and grieved; "but I am sick,—tired. The sun has made my head ache." And he threw himself down on the sofa, while Julia retired sobbing to her bed-room.

His head did ache; but when he reflected on Emily's supposed discovery, and on his cruel behaviour to poor Julia, his sense of shame overcame the consciousness of any other

feeling. He now felt his attachment to Miss Vivian more sensibly than he had ever done before, and the fall which he felt assured that he had suffered in her esteem, seemed only to bring home to him how entirely his happiness depended on her good opinion. Then his obligations to Julia, his promises, and the way in which he now returned her affection, forced themselves on his mind, and stung his conscience till his agitation nearly worked him into a mental fever.

"What a brute I have been to her!" thought he, as he rose and followed her to her room; — he found her nearly as wretched as himself.

"What have I done, Charles," said she, "that you should be so offended with me? Tell me, — say any thing, — do any thing to me but look so angry, and not speak, — I cannot bear that look."

"Nothing, I assure you, my dear Julia, — there is nothing in your conduct which I could ever wish altered."

"Then, Charles, you must be tired of me; let me leave you and return to my mother. Dearly as you know I love you, I had rather

do that than see you miserable; only do not desert my child, if I live to have one for you."

"No, Julia, you cannot, shall not leave me,—pray do not talk of it; but I have many things now which distress me. Do not, I beg, think, if you see me look gloomy, that you are the cause. And now make me a draught of lemonade, for I feel parched and heated, and send it to me in the next room, where I must write some letters which I have too long neglected;—you had then better lie down and try to sleep."

Vernon sat down to write, but was interrupted by Vulcan bringing in the lemonade. Vulcan had just been questioned by Julia as to the manner in which his master had received her letter, and unprepared with any other answer, and thinking the matter unimportant to Julia, he told the whole truth, and was alarmed when he saw the excitement with which she questioned him as to what the buckra lady said, and how she looked. Vernon could not but perceive the uneasy look of the negro; often since that wretched morning, he had doubted the truth of the account which

the man had given to him, he now doubted no longer; and in a low tone of voice, which made the negro tremble from its earnest emotion, he charged him to tell the truth as to what had taken place. A lie rose to the negro's lips, but he dared not utter it; he had already disclosed too much to Julia: and so again he told all. As soon as he had finished his story, which he did with his eyes on the ground, he raised them and looked at his master, expecting to encounter the wrath which his former lie had merited. His master's eye, however, did not meet his: absorbed in shame and grief, Vernon had sunk back in his chair, and Vulcan saw that he was not even conscious of his presence, as he moved towards the door, and stole out of the room.

Perhaps the worst part of Vernon's misery was the sense of shame and indecision. He felt a strong impulse to write to Miss Vivian, to entreat her forgiveness, and then renounce his hopes for ever; but his brain and hand seemed paralysed, and tearing up the notes which he had vainly tried to finish, he half resolved to meet her once more, and try to

say what he could not write. While he was thus undecided, the following note from Mrs. Vivian was put into his hand : —

" My dear Mr. Vernon,

" I find that the Otways have fixed their long-projected maroon party to the Yallass Falls for to-morrow ; we have promised to join it ; you too are considered engaged. Let me know whether you ride or drive, as I want to arrange means of conveyance for our numbers.

" Yours very truly,

" Mary Vivian.

" North Street, Wednesday."

" Yes, I will go," thought Vernon ; " I must see Emily once more, and then —" but the sentence was not to be completed.

In the mean time, a different scene was passing in the General's house. Mrs. Vivian and her daughter were alone in a room called the library, but also used as a store-room. Mrs. Vivian was busy directing the packing up of hampers of wine and provisions for the next day's party ; her daughter was seated

at her writing-table, much perplexed how to answer a letter which she had just received from her friend Harriet, for Vernon had written to his sister describing Emily as a lover would do, and naturally led his sister to infer that she should soon be able to call her friend by a dearer name ; and these anticipations found their way into her letter in the shape of such strong hints, that Emily could hardly answer it without replying to them. Her delicacy and dignity both forbade her to discover to his sister the grounds on which she had changed her opinion of Vernon ; and yet she could not bear to appear to her friend either capricious or mysterious. In endeavouring to reconcile these difficulties, she wrote a letter so different from her usual style, so laboured and so unsatisfactory, that she sighed as she sealed it, and thought what a different one she once intended to write.

Just then Vernon's note accepting the invitation for the next day was handed to her mother.

" Emily, my dear," said she, " Captain Vernon joins our party as I expected, but he says

that he will ride. How provoking! I must now alter the carriage arrangements." And Mrs. Vivian bustled out of the room to see the General about horses and carriages, leaving Emily alone, to her great relief.

She hoped to escape any explanation with Vernon, or with her parents: she could not bear to think of stating to him the ground of her refusal, and she felt that it would be still more painful to explain it to them, and perhaps might be ineffectual. Her father's military morals, and her mother's worldly ones, would prevent, she well knew, their feeling the force of her objection. She wished to be able to retain so much of her former manner to Vernon as to escape their observation; and if she could avoid a tête-à-tête with him, she hoped that he would fall back into his former irresolution — he could not hope always to have a hurricane to encourage him. She still was conscious of the tenderness which often tears the heart for an unworthy object, and she resolved to avoid a repetition of the contest, in which her father and mother would probably be on the side of her passion against her sense of propriety.

CHAPTER XII.

The next morning Vernon rode towards the place of rendezvous, ill-prepared to join a party of pleasure: he soon reached Rock Fort, and passed under its gateway, crossed its wooden drawbridge, and hurried along the level road, bounded on the left by the sloping wooded side of the Long Mountain, and by the lake-like waters of the harbour on the right, and after following the sea-shore for about six miles, arrived at a small inn on the roadside, where he found the carriages and servants of his party. The party, he was told, had arrived there about half an hour before, and had proceeded, some on foot, and some on horseback, towards the Falls, distant about two miles, by a road impracticable for carriages.

Vernon dismounted and followed: the way lay through a deep valley, between two mountain ridges. As he proceeded, the pass became narrower and narrower, and the mountain on

each side more lofty and perpendicular; a clear rivulet burst its way through the centre, over a rocky and narrow bed. At each turn of the ravine the scene became wilder and more imposing; tremendous cliffs now reared themselves on each side, and huge heads of projecting rock nearly met over his head; the gigantic masses appearing as if self-supported in the air: the grey rock was covered with moss and fern, and a long viney plant, whose stems swinging below looked like ladders of rope. One towering cliff stood out from the rest, and seemed so precipitous, that on looking up to it from below, there did not appear sufficient footing on its sides even for the small species of waterfowl which breed in these solitudes.

Here Vernon overtook his party, who were listening to Mr. Otway with so much attention, that his approach was nearly unnoticed, and he felt relieved in appearing to listen to the story which the old merchant was telling.

"There, Mrs. Vivian," said he, "just half way up that cliff, is the cave which was long

one of the favourite haunts of the famous negro robber, Three-fingered Jack. The opening is hidden by the palm trees which you see springing in such luxuriance out of the bare rock; but it is very near that prominence, something in the shape of a ship's head, half-way down from the top."

"But how was it possible to reach that entrance?" asked Mrs. Vivian.

"I have been told," continued Mr. Otway, "that there are small notches in the face of the rock, by which he used to descend to his retreat from above, bare-footed like all his race, and therefore better able to climb, and clinging, no doubt, to the vines and shrubs which grow on the sides. The security of his retreat is proved by the length of time during which he was the terror of the whole neighbourhood, and singly maintained himself against every attempt to take or kill him. A large reward was offered for his head, and freedom to his captor, if a slave. Though frequently pursued, he eluded every one for many years, and from his daring acts and constant success, inspired the negroes with a belief that he was specially protected by

Obeah charms. He was the Robin Hood of the island, robbing the rich planters, but befriending his own class.

"Why really," observed Mrs. Vivian, "I should think that he must have been safe when he once got back to his cave; it makes my head giddy to imagine any one's having to climb to so frightful a den. Did he die a natural death at last?"

"No; after setting the whole island at defiance for six or seven years, he was killed by John Reeder, a negro, who with two other slaves, encouraged by the high rewards offered, made the desperate attempt of encountering him in this very spot. The three negroes surprised him on the top of the cliff: he killed one of them with his cutlass at the first attack, and then made for his cave, pursued by the two others — he cut down a second on the brink of the precipice, but at this moment he received a pistol-shot from Reeder which broke his arm: they then closed, and a desperate struggle ensued, each trying to precipitate the other over the cliff, and so they both rolled over together. The boughs of a tree broke their

fall, and they came to the ground, Three-fingered Jack undermost: he was killed by the fall. Reeder escaped with broken ribs and other bruises. He obtained his freedom, and is now an old pensioned chieftain of the maroons, and lives in their mountains: he supposes that he is one hundred years old, but is still active, and can walk thirty miles in a day. He is to be seen sometimes in Kingston in the holidays, dressed in an old scarlet uniform, with cocked hat and epaulets, but barefooted. I will send him to you the next time I see him in town. But now let us go on towards the Falls."

"Ah, Mr. Vernon, better late than never: why we had almost given you up."

Vernon made his excuses and followed.

The roar of the cataract soon warned them of their approach to it, and another turn of the ravine brought them in front of the Fall. The brook whose course they had been tracing here came thundering down from the mountain above into a deep basin, in one continued fall of about a hundred feet.

The party had reached the foot of the Fall,

and were gazing on the sheet of rushing water, and on the surrounding scenery, when an exclamation of astonishment from Miss Otway attracted their attention to a party of mules loaded with coffee, issuing from what appeared only a cave in the rock, a little above them, and descending by a zig-zag path to the spot where they stood. The supposed cave was in fact a subterraneous passage through the rock, opening on the other side of the mountain, once forming a channel for the waters which, according to tradition, were diverted to their present course by an earthquake.

They now turned to get back to the dinner-tent, which had been prepared under the shade of a rock, half way between the Falls and the high road.

This is the real charm of a pic-nic. Rocks, and ravines, and waterfalls, and fine scenery, do very well for a while to fill up the time; but the great event is the dinner.

Vernon and Miss Vivian, separated from the rest of the party, who had outstripped them, found themselves alone in the wild ravine. A few common-place words were all that Ver-

non could at first give utterance to. The stream frequently crossed the road, and Miss Vivian could not refuse his assistance while obliged to scramble over the stepping-stones which served for bridges. Her presence again overpowered Vernon's resolutions; but there was a change in Emily Vivian's manner. He pressed her hand as he supported her in crossing one of the obstacles in their path, while he said in a trembling voice,—

"And is it thus we are to meet again, Miss Vivian? How differently you spoke and looked a few days since! Why do I find you so unlike your former self?"

"Ask not me! Ask your own conscience, Mr. Vernon!" said Emily, withdrawing her hand. Her voice was low, calm, and firm, and thrilled through Vernon's soul; his tongue felt parched within his mouth as he tried to make a reply, and after one or two half efforts to pronounce the first word, he gave up the attempt. The next turn of the path brought them in sight of the dinner-tent, in which places had been kept for them in the midst of the general's party.

Here all was gay and cheerful : the clatter of knives and plates, the sounds of mirth and laughter from a large party of young people who were crowding at the other end of the tent, and were enjoying the novelty and excitement of the scene, with the absence of restraint or form, which is the charm of a maroon party, jarred on the feelings of both Vernon and Miss Vivian. The hour passed in the tent was painful to both, though Emily's self-esteem and resolution enabled her to sustain the trial much the best. Nobody but Vernon traced in her manner any alteration in her feelings ; but to him every tone of her voice, every glance of her eye, carried rejection and disappointment, — the more painful, perhaps, from the slight shades by which it was indicated. Had it been expressed by coldness and distance, his pride might have been roused to resent it, and perhaps soothed by the apparent effort which it cost her. But the contrast between her apparent frankness and unconstraint, and the real barrier which he knew to exist between them, between the intimacy with which they seemed to meet, and the eter-

nal rupture which he felt had taken place, and the constantly recurring recollection of the happiness which he should at that moment have been enjoying if his own misconduct had not poisoned it, became almost too painful for endurance. He sat like Macbeth, conscious of the presence of a spectre invisible to every other guest ; and after a few fruitless attempts to join in the general conversation, sunk into despondence and silence.

The party at length broke up ; and Vernon, excusing himself, on the plea of a headache, from accepting Mrs. Vivian's invitation to rejoin them at supper, remounted his horse, and returned to his lodgings.

Here he had to encounter the distress of poor Julia, who was shocked by his haggard looks. Her tears could not soothe him : they only roused his conscience, and added to the stings of disappointment, remorse, and perplexity.

He felt a giddiness and an unusual lassitude, and went early to bed. The night seemed as if it would never end. Julia and Emily, the hurricane and the dinner-tent, linked in some

unaccountable manner, and accompanied by strange and undefined feelings of pain, danger, and perplexity, chased one another in endless succession through his imagination.

When at length the morning came, he found the lassitude and languor of the preceding day rather increased, and Julia's presence rather irritated than tranquillised her patient. Her kindness stung him with shame and repentance; her affection recalled to him his ingratitude and his inconstancy; and even her beauty, and artless but uninformed conversation, put him in mind of the accomplished and high-minded woman from whom he was for ever separated by his intimacy with her.

These reflections afforded fuel to the low nervous fever which had attacked him, and he grew daily worse; apathy succeeded to feelings which were too acute to last long, and his physician frankly confessed that nothing but a change of scene and climate could be of any use.

Vernon had sunk into such a state of morbid indifference, that he had not energy to decide for himself. His friend Captain O'Halloran

was constantly with him, and joined Mr. M'Kenzie and General Vivian in urging his compliance with his physician's advice; and as a cold climate was recommended, suggested to him to embark in a brig called the Flora, owned by Mr. Otway, which was to join a convoy on the point of sailing, under the protection of a sloop of war, for Canada.

To this arrangement Vernon consented, rather to avoid further discussion than from much hope of amendment.

Poor Julia assisted in packing up his wardrobe with a heavy heart; she felt a presentiment that the separation would be final. At length the day came. After a sleepless night, she tried in vain that morning to hide her feelings; and on hearing the arrival of Captain O'Halloran, who was to attend Vernon on board, threw herself on the sofa, apparently senseless. Vernon, to save her and himself the pain of formally taking leave, paused a minute to take a farewell look opposite the sofa, where she lay in silent grief, her head thrown back on the cushion, her eyes closed, but the tears still starting from the lids, and trickling down

her cheeks, and her long black hair hanging unbound over her shoulders. He stooped and kissed her forehead, and was leaving the room, when she started wildly up, and clung round him; then, relaxing her embrace, seized his hand, pressed it to her lips, and pronounced an emphatic "God bless you!" then let go her hold, and fell back again on the sofa.

Vernon felt the tears rush to his eyes, and hastily quitted the room; but there was a tenderness in Julia's manner and expression of countenance and voice in this interview which he could never forget. Years after, the recollection haunted his memory, and he could almost fancy that he heard again this last adieu.

CHAPTER XIII.

As Cæsar was unwilling to leave his wife, Vernon took Pompey, a young negro, as his servant. When on board, he felt his health daily revive, but his spirits continued depressed; if possible, they sunk still lower, as the apathy occasioned by the fever went off; and on the fourth morning he watched with useless regret the blue mountains of Jamaica, disappearing in the distant horizon, and soon altogether lost sight of the land which now contained almost all that he loved and valued. He threw himself into his cot, and heard with indifference that a "black squall" was coming on, which was doubly dangerous as night was fast approaching. The sun had set behind a dark bank of clouds, which extended themselves along the horizon, and came moving on with a grand but terrific rapidity right against the trade-wind: all hands were called on deck, and the captain's voice was heard preparing for the coming gale.

" Lower away the topsails; close reef the mainsail:" while the carpenter descended to the cabin to put in the dead lights.

The trade-wind ceased, and a short calm succeeded; but soon the wind, accompanied by a long rolling swell, began to blow in an opposite direction, faint at first, but gradually stronger and more violent, till it drove the vessel before it with prodigious velocity. Torrents of rain accompanied the storm, each beam of the vessel's side quivered and creaked; while the blast, whistling and howling in the rigging above, seemed to exult over its intended victims.

Vernon still swung in his cot, reckless of what might happen.

" Oh, massa! massa!" said Pompey, " we going for drown. Oh, poor me!"

" Well I can't help you, my poor fellow; we must submit to our fate."

" Me been 'pon deck, massa, and me hear da Duppies cry in de water."

" Hear the devil," answered Vernon.

" You tink him debil for true massa? who him come for?"

"For all of us, I suppose; but leave me alone, I want to sleep."

The squall lulled for a few minutes, and then burst again: the reefed mainsal was torn from the mast, and for a while the ship could no longer be steered. A staysail was set as a last resource, and the vessel again obeyed her helm; the intervals between the gusts of wind became longer; and when the squall did return, its force gradually diminished. Towards morning the gale had subsided; but at daybreak not one of the convoy was to be seen, and the vessel had been driven with such rapidity before the wind, that no calculation could be formed of the exact situation in which they were, till an observation could be taken.

At twelve o'clock an observation was obtained, from which the captain calculated that they must be not far from the eastern extremity of Cuba; but no land was yet in sight.

At daybreak the following morning, a sailor was sent up to the mast-head to look out for land; but instead of this he sung out, "A sail right aft!" The breezes were very light, and the sail so far off that she could be seen

only from the mast-head; whatever she was, however, she was clearly gaining on them, and with this impression the captain descended, at seven o'clock, to breakfast, looking ominously serious. Vernon, still in his cot, at first heard the tidings of their being chased by a possible enemy with the indifference with which he had treated the storm the night before: this apathy the captain of the Flora mistook for a want of courage, and reascended to the deck, muttering something about "a soldier."

He was disagreeably interested in reconnoitring the large sail, which now had very much gained on them, and, through a glass, was clearly to be seen from the deck. She was a black schooner, very broad in the beam, and, whether friend or foe, was crowding canvass. She was soon afterwards observed to wet her sails (which increases speed by making them hold more wind), and betrayed an anxiety to get up with the Flora, which strengthened, almost to a certainty, the captain's suspicions of her being an enemy. The Flora then also wetted her sails, and threw some of her deck cargo overboard; but still

the strange sail evidently neared her rapidly, and by ten o'clock was so close that an English flag could be discovered from her mizen: she was prodigiously large for a schooner, and full of men, — two discoveries, neither of which pleased Captain Robins of the Flora. He descended again to the cabin, and asked Vernon, who was still lounging in his cot, "if he intended skulking there, or taking his post on deck?"

"Skulking! Captain Robins, what do you mean?"

"Why, here is an American privateer very near close alongside of us; but the Flora shan't strike to her till we have tried her cannon. Will you and your servant assist in defending the ship?"

"Of course," said Vernon, jumping out of his cot with more vivacity than he had felt since his illness; and in two minutes he sprang up the companion-steps, calling to Pompey to follow him.

"Massa no top on deck," said Pompey; "'pose buckra fight, den massa get killed."

"No, Pompey, we must both do our best:

so do you take one of those cutlasses, and don't tremble so if you can help it."

He found all on deck prepared for action; six eight-pound carronades (three on each side) and a long twelve-pounder at the stern, were the whole of the Flora's armament: these were immediately loaded, and the boarding netting fixed up. The crew were then each assigned to their stations. They consisted of the captain, mate, and boatswain, sixteen seamen, their passenger, and poor Pompey — an appalling inferiority to the privateer, who from the crowded state of her deck appeared to have at least a hundred men.

The seamen were all stationed at the guns, and Vernon and his servant had each a musket given to them, while some boarding-pikes and cutlasses were brought out from the arm-chest, and placed ready for every one's use in case the enemy attempted to board. These arrangements completed, the Flora's crew awaited in anxious uncertainty the approach of the schooner.

Vernon stood at the stern, next the captain,

and after viewing her with the glass, observed,—

"An immense superiority of numbers she has, captain, if she prove an enemy."

"Yes, but she is much lower in the water than we are, and does not appear to carry any large guns."

"I can only discover two swivels on each side," observed Vernon, still looking through his glass, "and one long gun, and that midships."

"Well, if we can keep her at long shots I don't fear her; and if we have the luck to hull her, we may sink her; or if we strike her rigging and masts, we may at any rate disable her so as to escape."

"And if she boards us?"

"Why that, as she is so low, she will find a difficult job."

"At any rate, captain, we will not give up while there is a hope."

"No, that is not my character. Jack Robins has beat 'em off before now."

"Holloa there! bring up the Union Jack, Williams; we will, at any rate, show our

colours, and she may then favour us with a sight of her true ones."

The Union Jack was accordingly hoisted, and the schooner answered by pulling down her assumed English flag, and displaying in its place the stars and stripes of the United States of America, firing, at the same time, a shot at the Flora.

"Yankees, by G—d!" exclaimed the captain; "put the helm up; we'll give 'em a broadside — steady — now let fly into her, boys!" and a raking broadside from the Flora fully evinced her determination to defend herself. But the range was miscalculated; the shot passed over the schooner with little or no effect. The privateer rapidly came up, and with true American ostentation, all the crew mounted on the rigging, or stood on their vessel's side, so as to show their immense superiority of numbers, giving three insulting cheers, and hailing the Flora through a speaking-trumpet, desired her to "strike to the American privateer, Washington." The Flora's brave little crew gave three cheers in return, and fired a second time

into her as answer ; this time with better effect. The schooner's topsail halliards were cut away, and the sail dropped fluttering on the deck. The privateer returned the fire instantly ; the two ships were now within pistol-shot of each other, and Vernon could not help instinctively wincing as he heard the grape-shot and musketry from the first fire of the privateer whiz about his ears. He found that it cured him most effectually, however, of any of the apathy which fever had left behind ; his blood warmed, and his spirits rose with the danger ; and he astonished the captain (who at first had thought meanly of his courage) by his activity and presence of mind.

Broadside now succeeded broadside from the Flora, and volleys of musketry from the privateer. After this had continued for some minutes, the schooner running her bowsprit over the Flora's quarter, indicated an immediate intention of boarding. About twenty ruffian-looking fellows an instant after crowded up the narrow bowsprit of the privateer, covering it completely, brandishing their cutlasses, and, mixed with their pistol-shot, pouring forth a

volley of curses on their adversaries. The Flora's crew seized each a boarding-pike, a cutlass, a musket, or an unfixed bayonet, and ran to the side of the ship where the attack was threatened. Vernon was amongst the foremost; and the foremost of the Americans, after damning his own heart and liver, and discharging a brace of pistols at Vernon (one of the balls of which passed through his coat collar), swore he would give no quarter, but would make mince-meat of him, and heave him overboard to feed the sharks. He was in the act of springing down on the Flora's deck, when Vernon discharged his musket at him (he had reserved his fire for this occasion), and felt strong pleasure at seeing him pitch head foremost into the sea. The two Americans next on the bowsprit made a similar attempt; but the first was pierced by a pike, as as he was endeavouring to get over the boarding netting, and the other; on reaching the deck, was cut down. The courage of those behind failed, and they suffered the ships to part; but two of the Flora's crew had now fallen to rise no more, struck by the vollies of musketry;

and Captain Robins, his mate, and four of the crew were so badly wounded, as to be compelled to leave the deck, leaving only the boatswain to command. Vernon also missed his servant Pompey from the reduced numbers on the deck, and feared that he was either killed or severely wounded.

The remainder of the crew, however, still kept up the contest. Some marksmen stationed at the privateer's mast-head were employed in aiming at those whom they took for the commanders of the Flora's crew, and especially at the helmsman — no one being able to retain this important post more than ten minutes before he was struck ; but the next in turn regularly took his place, even without waiting to be called, though in doing so he incurred almost the certainty of being hit.

Vernon was standing close to the rudder, taking aim at these marksmen in the enemy's tops, when the man at the helm, mortally struck in the breast, fell against him, and threw him down under him. He was covered with blood, and, as he threw him off, and, rising, witnessed the convulsions of death distorting

the man's face, he felt shocked, even if fear had no part in his feelings.

The deck now presented a horrid scene, two thirds of the crew lying there either killed or wounded; and the quantity of blood spilt in so small a space, made it one continued pool, and so slippery that it was very difficult to avoid falling. Vernon was once knocked down by either a splinter or a block falling on him; and afterwards the barrel of his musket turned off a ball, which, had it struck him, would have gone through his heart.

The privateer meanwhile observing that her fire had succeeded in thinning the numbers on the Flora's deck, made a second attempt to board. Eight of the crew, the boatswain, and Vernon were all who remained unhurt and able to oppose them; and the Americans, observing the small number of their opponents, crowded up their bowsprit, and leaped down on the Flora's deck with great confidence. Vernon cut down the first boarder, shot another, and was engaged with a third, when a musket-ball struck him in the arm: his cutlass dropped from his hand, and a blow on the head from the cutlass of his op-

ponent laid him senseless at his feet, apparently dead. The small remainder of the Flora's crew, finding opposition now hopeless, gave way, and jumping down the main-hatchway, left the deck to their conquerors.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London:
Spottiswoode and Shaw,
New-street Square.

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